DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 355 672 EC 301 783

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Rockwell, Sylvia |
| TITLE | Tough To Reach, Tough To Teach: Students with Behavior Problems. |
| INSTITUTION | Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, Va. |
| REPORT NO | ISBN-0-86586-235-4 |
| PUB DATE | 93 |
| NOTE | 112p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22090 (Stock No. P387, $20; $14 members). |
| PUB TYPE | Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC05 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Behavior Change; *Behavior Disorders; Behavior Modification; Behavior Problems; Behavior Standards; *Classroom Environment; *Classroom Techniques; Discipline; Discipline Problems; Elementary Secondary Education; Intervention; Parent Teacher Conferences; Parent Teacher Cooperation; Positive Reinforcement; Remedial Instruction; Scheduling; Teacher Student Relationship; Teaching Skills |

ABSTRACT

This book on students with behavior disorders is intended to serve as a resource on intervention strategies for regular education teachers, administrators, and support personnel. After an introductory chapter, a chapter on classroom climate considers setting limits, safety, trust, acceptance, and sense of purpose. The next chapter, on scheduling, stresses balancing individual and group activities and blending academic and behavioral needs. Chapter 4 takes up the topic of interventions, including the use of reinforcers, other techniques (e.g., teaching decision-making steps and setting group goals), dealing with setbacks, and touching. Instructional ideas in the areas of math, reading, science, social studies, spelling, and language are offered in chapter 5, and chapter 6, on dealing with changes, offers both general guidelines and specific suggestions for dealing with the upsets caused by changes in the routine, and especially with the profanity that often erupts as a consequence. The next-to-last chapter, on parent/teacher relations, considers false accusations of teacher misconduct, lack of parent involvement, bribery versus behavior management, the initial parent/teacher meeting, and examples of parent/teacher communications. The final chapter offers personal tips on preventing teacher burnout. Appendices, making up about half of the handbook, include sample lesson plan forms; worksheets; progress charts; notes to aides; notes to parents; decision-making sheets; ideas for instructional games; organizational projects for students; intervention tips; and checklists for intervention strategies. (DB)

ED355672

# TOUGH to Reach Tough to TEACH

## Students with Behavior Problems

by

Sylvia Rockwell

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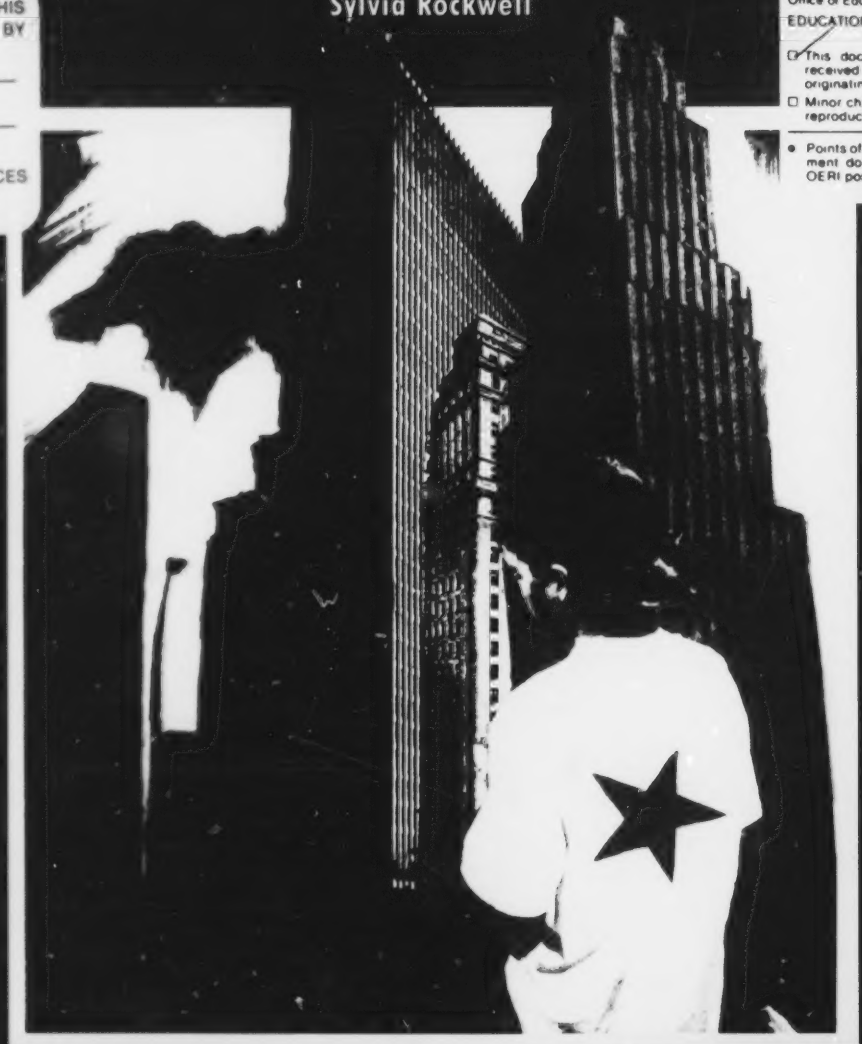

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**The Council for Exceptional Children**
1920 Association Drive • Reston, Virginia 22091
703/620-3660 (Voice/TDD)
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# TOUGH to Reach
# Tough to TEACH

## Students with Behavior Problems

by

Sylvia Rockwell

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Published by The Council for Exceptional Children

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Rockwell, Sylvia.
Tough to reach, tough to teach : students with behavior problems / by Sylvia Rockwell.
p. cm.
Includes index.
ISBN 0-86586-235-4
1. Problem children—Education—United States. 2. Classroom management—United States. 3. Behavior modification—United States. I. Title.
LC4802.R63 1993
371.93—dc20 92-43363
CIP

ISBN 0-86586-235-4

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Stock No. P387

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Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

# Foreword

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is committed to the publication of resources produced by teachers for teachers. This work, by Sylvia Rockwell, who teaches in a school for students with severe behavioral problems, is certain to be welcomed by other teachers who work with disruptive students. In this highly readable text, Ms. Rockwell offers practical suggestions for managing behaviors that can be most upsetting even to highly experienced teachers. Profanity, fighting, tantrums, and resistance are all behaviors that make kids "tough to reach and tough to teach."

The vignettes used by Ms. Rockwell to illustrate various classroom challenges are unfortunately all too familiar to teachers in contemporary classrooms. Children do not have to be classified "emotionally disturbed" or "behaviorally disordered" to act out when under stress. Being prepared is half the battle, and this resource will help every teacher be better prepared to teach all students better ways to communicate.

Ms. Rockwell's experiences with children with behavioral problems range from intensive round-the-clock teaching and supervision in wilderness camp settings to traditional classroom teaching. Ms. Rockwell has also worked with students who are gifted. She received the "Teacher of the Year Award" from Calvin A. Hunsinger School in 1991 and the "Distinguished Alumni Award" from Okaloosa Walton Junior College in 1990. We are proud to count Ms. Rockwell among the members of CEC. We appreciate her contribution to improving educational outcomes for students with exceptionalities and assisting professionals by creating this resource to enhance effective professional practice.

*George E. Ayers*
*Executive Director*

This book is dedicated with love and appreciation to my husband, John. His belief in me helped me begin this book. His willingness to take on added household chores allowed me to complete it.

Kala, Donnie, and Jesse are mentioned with love and thanks for the times they not only let Mom work, but also were overheard telling their friends about this book with a shared sense of excitement.

John Rieser and Duque Wilson are mentioned for their loving, nurturing guidance. For almost 20 years, they have served as mentors and friends.

For all past, present, and future students, a special thanks is in order. Their courage and strength are a constant source of wonder and inspiration.

And last, but not least, a thanks to Dr. Eleanor Guetzloe for her wonderful support, professional guidance, and positive approach.

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# 1

# Introduction

This book focuses on students who have behavior disorders. The anecdotal sections represent typical events in a special education class for students with behavior disorders. Many of the problems these students have are also common problems in regular education classrooms. For this reason, regular education teachers, administrators, and support personnel may find this to be a wonderful resource in their efforts to understand and respond effectively to the needs of all students.

Although some of the language in this book may be offensive, it is included only to illustrate the reality of some of the challenges teachers and their students face. While it is disconcerting to hear abusive language from such young students, it is comforting to have a plan in mind to deal with the important task of teaching students more effective ways to communicate.

The morning sun filters through a haze of fog as a cool breeze rustles the fallen leaves. A deceptively soothing stage is set for the day's adventure. Like Pandora's box, the opening of the bus doors brings a swarm of frantic activity.

My few moments of quiet reflection are broken as bus 825 pulls into the driveway of DKJ Elementary School. Before the bus has come to a complete stop, I am standing, straining to get a clue as to the atmosphere inside the bus. As the doors open, several children are already out of their seats, feet scuffling, booksacks slapping against backs and backrests. Voices rise in anger or joyfully acknowledge another's anger. The bus driver gives me the thumbs down sign and shakes her head.

Lydel is the first one off the bus. He's almost 10 years old, but he has experienced more tragedy than most adults. Family members have been killed in his presence. Drug abuse, sexual abuse, and frequent changes in guardians, along with impoverished living conditions, have taken their toll on his sense of reality, self-respect, and trust. Lydel experiences hallucinations when not kept on medication. Voices, which he describes as his protection, tell him who will hurt him so he can attack before the other person has a chance to strike first or even defend himself. Medication controls the voices and the unexpected attacks that accompany them. Only time and a lot of work will make a dent in his sense of self-control and trust.

Next in line is Tomika, our only girl. Tomika is 8 years old, looks younger, and acts as if she were 28. Of all our children, she is the most exceptional at controlling her classmates. On a good day, she can be very helpful—a busy mother hen soothing over arguments, reprimanding those who forget class rules, and cajoling reluctant classmates into compliance. The boys vie for her special attention. She loves it and uses them unmercifully. On bad days, she leads them into any inappropriate behavior she can conjure up. Money, food, and promises of extra attention are just a few of the incentives she's been known to use with peers to pit them against each other and those in authority over them. Adults are Tomika's most difficult dilemma. She desperately wants their love and protection, and just as desperately wants to maintain the upper hand.

Tommy's booksack flies over Tomika's head and rolls across the sidewalk before his slight body becomes visible in the doorway. I approach cautiously from the side and hear Tommy's slurred speech and cries as the bus driver holds his hands and tries to calm him. The other children, on and off the bus, explode into laughter and rounds of teasing remarks. Tommy is our youngest, mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially. He was taken from his biological mother when he was 4 years old because of neglect. Even after 3 years in foster care, he still suffers from the effects of the neglect in obvious ways such as hearing and speech difficulties and in harder to access areas such as emotional immaturity and poor impulse control.

"Tommy, come on now and get your booksack." Tommy pulls away from the bus driver, jumps down the steps, and draws back his fist, threatening to punch Lydel, who is rolling on the sidewalk, kicking his feet and howling with laughter.

"Look at the baby!"

"Lydel. Get up. Help Tommy and yourself by lining up." Without taking a breath, I turn to Tommy. "Tommy. Hands at your sides."

"Everyone is laughing at me."

"It's time to line up, Tommy. Get your booksack."

I keep an eye on Tommy, Lydel, and Tomika as Kevin, Marcus, and Johnathan file off the bus in varying stages of dis'ress due to the confusion.

Kevin's biological mother abused drugs while she was pregnant with him. He was hospitalized during his first few months of life for malnutrition and allergies. Since infancy, he has lived in a single foster home with parents who have one child of their own. Kevin has an insatiable need for attention and is easily frustrated, but he is manageable in small group settings as long as his need for recognition is met frequently and positively.

Marcus is verbally and physically aggressive. His body is solid and strong. Profanity, threats, and actual physical attacks are so much a part of his behavior that I wonder whether he ever has time to relax and be an 8-year-old boy. What happened to the child behind that "macho man" facade? According to school records, he is the only child in the class with an intact family. Other than the fact that he is the baby of the family, his mother has no clue as to the origin of his adjustment problems.

"Good morning, Kevin and Marcus."

"Hi, Mrs. R. Did you see what Tommy did?"

"Yes, Kevin. Please help him by getting in line."

"What'd you say? I didn't do nothing!" Marcus yells, jerking his shoulders back.

"Good morning, Marcus." I smile, hoping he'll read the nonverbal cues and relax a little.

"Oh . . . Hi." He looks at me guardedly over his shoulder as I turn to check on Johnathan.

Johnathan is doing well. He goes to regular classes for 2 to 3 hours a day. We are trying to ease him into full-time mainstreaming. Unlike the others, Johnathan has never been as much of a threat to others as he has been to himself. Multiple divorces and parental bouts of drug addiction took a toll on his early development. Low self-esteem and fears combined to paralyze him. He became easy prey for more aggressive classmates, who could reduce him to tears, screaming, and anguished writhing on the floor with little more than a whispered threat. As Johnathan's parents struggled to overcome their own difficulties, Johnathan began his journey. Learning to be assertive in a healthy, self-respecting manner was essential to any future success.

"Hello, Johnathan."

"Hey, Mrs. Rockwell, I got my homework."

"Great, Johnathan! We'll look at it in the room. OK?"

"OK. What's wrong with Tommy?"

"He's upset right now. Let's line up. Kevin is the leader today."

"Mrs. R., Lydel and Tommy won't get in line."

Welcome to the world of teaching students with behavior problems. In public school settings, these children are described as exhibiting extremely inappropriate behavior given the situation and stimulus. Their behavior interferes with their academic progress but is not a result of low IQ or any physical impairment such as deafness.

This description is neat, unemotional, and totally operational. It does nothing to prepare the unsuspecting, uninitiated adult for the reality of daily life in such a classroom.

Emotions run high. Stress, if not dealt with constructively, takes its toll on the children and the teacher. Energy, enthusiasm, and a tolerance for ambiguity are the teacher's first lines of defense. The children will curse, physically attack, criticize real and imagined limitations, and test adults and each other to the very edge of decency and integrity. They will need and expect the teacher's intelligent, humane, and professional best in response to the worst they can muster.

Why would a basically gentle, capable, well-educated person submit himself or herself to such treatment on a daily basis for 10 months out of a year? The need for a challenge is one reason, along with the feeling of awe experienced when given the privilege of watching children grow in their sense of self-confidence, self-control, and trust in others.

These students are not incapable of learning. If behavior problems did not exist, they would be average or above-average students. Their failure to master academic material is a manifestation of other, more pressing problems.

At this time, no professional team has the absolute answer for these troubling and troubled children. For some children, metabolic or brain dysfunctions too subtle for modern technology to detect may be at the root of the problem. For some, hereditary tendency or prenatal drug abuse by the mother is blamed. For others, abuse, neglect, or unstable home environments seem to be a cause. Whatever the constellation of real or assumed causes, no one has a sure-fire cure.

Anyone who knows and loves even one healthy, typical child is aware of the powerful need for love, attention, discipline, and instruction. Children with behavior problems require extra measures of these from firm and caring adults.

This book tells a story while providing information. Certain names and events are disguised to protect the identities of children who may one day grow beyond their present disabilities. The story is meant to be an illustration of the challenges students with behavior problems and their teachers encounter; the hopes and dreams they often cling to in spite of the evidence against them; and the realities, both positive and negative, a teacher must be willing to accept with love and faith in order to face another day, month, or year with these very special children.

Maintaining control is an essential teaching skill. The interventions described here are designed to help teachers remain in control of the classroom and themselves. The strategies provided are examples of techniques used successfully in a public school setting. Classroom atmosphere, scheduling, behavior management, integrating individual needs with group instruction, and techniques for dealing with changes are the major topics discussed.

# 2

# Classroom Climate

"1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . Great! I see Kevin in line. Thank you, Tomika. Look at Lydel and Johnathan! Good job, Marcus! Tommy, I see you have your booksack now. Please get in line."

"Let's just go. He's a baby!"

"We need to help Tommy make a good decision, Lydel."

"OK," Lydel says grudgingly, "Come on, Tommy. Line up with me."

"Thank you, Lydel."

"Tommy, what is your decision? Will you line up on your own or do you want me to hold your hand?"

With a silent, murderous look, Tommy jerks himself into line, and we began the walk back to the classroom.

Setting a healthy, productive classroom climate begins before the children come through the door. Five basic components of classroom climate are setting limits, safety, trust, acceptance, and a sense of purpose. These components will be illustrated through the anecdotal story as well as through direct explanations of terms, strategies, and interventions.

## SETTING LIMITS

Every teacher has a set of rules and procedures for children to follow. Hopefully, the limits will be refined as children's abilities to comply increase. There is, however, one rule that must be enforced from the beginning. *People are not for hurting.* Any attempts on the part of the children to attack the teacher or each other physically must be stopped.

Each school and each teacher have guidelines for handling physical aggression. There are programs that teach intervention strategies aimed at de-escalating situations appropriately using physical proximity, redirecting attention, and intervening verbally. A teacher can do a great deal to prevent physical aggression by creatively arranging classroom supplies and furniture, remaining calm in spite of upsetting behavior, and being alert for signs of trouble.

General guidelines to follow when setting limits include the following:

1. Keep rules to a minimum.
2. State rules clearly. In some cases, "stay in your area" may mean having a square taped to the floor around the desk. Putting one toe over the line would mean being out of your area.
3. Provide students with a hierarchy of consequences, both positive and negative. Compliance means rewards. Noncompliance means punishments.
4. Be as good as your word. If three talk-outs in 15 minutes earns 3 minutes in a cool-off chair, then stick to it. Don't get mad and send the student to the chair after two talk-outs. Don't let six go by before responding.
5. Don't promise rewards or punishments that are not possible.
6. Only demand behavior that can be enforced. Be specific about what students must accomplish. Telling a student that a special activity will be earned if he or she has been "on task" only invites arguments. The student will inevitably claim that he or she was "trying" to finish.
7. Model the appropriate response for the children at every opportunity. Discuss your behavior as well as the students' positive steps toward self-control at regular times each day. This technique works slowly over time. While it does not produce instant, measurable changes in behavior, it is a powerful tool of instruction when used consistently.
8. As closely as possible, have the punishment fit the crime. Sitting in a chair in the corner for being off task doesn't make as much sense as missing all or part of a special activity while completing the task. Teaching students that their behavior is under their control and that consequences are more often than not a result of their own behavior is the toughest part of the educational process. A student who completes the work on time can be told, "You have chosen to get your work done even though you felt like quitting. Now you have time for a special activity. Aren't you glad that you decided to use your time wisely today?"
9. Keep power struggles to a minimum. Set limits by using impersonal, measurable criteria. Timers that "ding" to signal the end of an activity, for example, are easier for some children to respond to than the teacher's telling them to stop. It is also helpful to post schedules, daily independent work assignments, and lists of rules and consequences on walls and bulletin boards for students to refer to.
10. Be positive. Setting limits is healthy. It does not have to be done in a rude or hostile way. Firmness does not mean intimidation.
11. Set limits by requesting behavior that is incompatible with the undesirable behavior. Many times it will be far more effective to say "Hands at your sides!" instead of "Don't hit!"
12. Give students choices. The fact that they have choices should be a constant topic of each conversation concerning behavior. An example might be "I see that this assignment is taking longer than you had hoped. You may choose to finish it now or you may use part of your lunch period to complete it. The work must be done by the end of lunch if you plan to attend the special activity period. You may decide when you want to finish the assignment."
13. Use physical proximity to help students correct their own behavior. Moving closer to a student who is off task, talking, or showing signs of agitation often results in compliance without a word being said directly to the student.

14. Redirect attention to get students out of stressful situations before they lose composure. Select students who are acting appropriately to go on errands or do jobs. Stapling papers, filing, collating worksheet packets, and cleaning chalkboard erasers are common favorites. This strategy can divert a child's attention, prevent a fight, and give the teacher time to deal with students who are acting inappropriately and/or instigating misbehavior. Other situations that this technique applies to include academic stress relief and helping overactive children find acceptable uses for their energy.

    The following anecdote illustrates several useful techniques.

> "Kevin, you need a class behind you if you want to be a leader."
>
> "I am the leader! It's my day."
>
> "I know, Kevin. But, if you get too far ahead, you'll be walking alone."
>
> "OK, I'll slow down."
>
> "Thank you, Kevin. That's just the right speed. I see Johnathan, Lydel, Tommy, and Tomika walking quietly with hands at their sides. Nice walking, people!"
>
> As the students file into the room and settle quietly into their seats, I keep my eyes and ears open for subtle signs of moods and needs. Away from the crowds at the bus area, Lydel is calmer and tries to help Tommy with his booksack.
>
> "Hey, man. I can get that buckle undone for you."
>
> "Leave me alone," Tommy whines.
>
> "What's your problem? I just wanted to help."
>
> "Lydel, I think Tommy's still unhappy about what happened at the bus."
>
> "Yeah! I'm not a baby! And, I don't need your help."
>
> "Oh! OK. Be that way. See if I care!"
>
> "Lydel, thank you for wanting to help. Let Tommy take care of his own booksack. I think he can handle it. Would you like to help Ms. Agnew file homework papers?"
>
> "Sure!"
>
> I walk from desk to desk collecting homework, putting play money into banks, and talking positively to each student.
>
> "Kevin, you did your math and spelling homework and led our line at just the right speed. You also earned your bus points. And now I see that you are ready for class. You've earned 25 cents already this morning, and you've only been here 5 minutes!" Kevin smiles and sits up straight as I go to the next desk.
>
> "Tomika, I like your neat handwriting on this spelling homework. But where is your math?"
>
> "I forgot it."
>
> "Bring it back tomorrow, and you can still get credit for it. OK?"
>
> "OK."
>
> "And thank you for talking nicely to Tommy on the bus. It really helps. You've earned 15 cents."

"How's it going, Tommy?" No response . . . . "Tommy, it's OK. I know you were upset earlier. But, I'm not mad." No response . . . . "If you have your homework, I need to see it. Otherwise, you won't get paid."

"Come on, Tommy. Give her your homework. You know you want to go to the classroom store today." Tomika urges him gently.

Slowly, Tommy's head rises, and two crumpled papers unfold in his open hands.

"Thank you, Tommy. I know it's hard to talk when you're upset. Sitting quietly right now is a good decision. Turning in your homework and walking to the classroom on your own were also good decisions. Here is your money for homework and appropriate line behavior."

"What about my money for bus behavior?"

"I'm sorry, Tommy. You decided to act inappropriately on the bus. You did not earn your money or points for that."

Tommy's head goes down again as I pat his shoulder and move on.

"Well, look at Marcus! The bus driver tells me that you were quiet and appropriate this morning."

"So?"

"So, I'm pleased."

"Wow! You're pleased. Everybody clap. Mrs. Rockwell is p-l-e-a-s-e-d."

Marcus has difficulty accepting compliments. The class can easily be disrupted by disrespectful comments if tension is really high. When the class is able to ignore inappropriate remarks, however, it is helpful to focus on the positive and ignore discounting statements.

"Thank you for earning your bus points and money, Marcus."

"All right, Johnathan! Mrs. Crenshaw will be so proud of the work you put into this math homework!"

"Do you think I can start going to Mrs. Crenshaw's class for science, too?"

"That depends on you, Johnathan. How do you earn that privilege?"

"Earn my points and do my work."

"Right!"

"Lydel, are you ready to be paid?"

"Yeah."

"Where do you need to be first?"

"In my seat."

"OK. There you go. Thank you for helping Ms. Agnew."

All of this takes less than 5 minutes. Starting the day out positively puts money in the bank in more ways than one. As the teacher, I am responsible for doing everything in my power to set a cooperative tone for the day.

Avoid fights by redirecting attention and energy. Avoid power struggles by making it clear that each person makes his or her own decisions. Ignore disrespectful comments meant to discount earned rewards. Face each day with a firm belief in each student's desire and ability to grow. These are all unspoken messages behind the teacher's words and actions.

## SAFETY

Safety is the number one priority in a classroom for children with behavior problems. Poor impulse control, low tolerance for frustration, physical aggressiveness, and limited contact with reality make for potentially hazardous conditions. Careful attention to the physical environment of the classroom is the first line of defense in preventing problems.

General guidelines for room arrangement include the following:

1. Provide students with adequate space around their desks. If students are seated so that they can touch each other easily without getting up, stealing and hitting problems could escalate.
2. Keep all items not in immediate use in cabinets or closets. Lock the cabinets or closets if possible. The more items available for an angry child to throw, the more rewarding and potentially harmful the tantrum becomes.
3. Keep scissors, X-acto knives, and other potential weapons out of students' reach.
4. Closely supervise art and cooking activities. Make it clear that these activities will stop if rules are not followed.
5. If necessary, arrange furniture to provide students with visual barriers during independent work times.
6. Make areas of the room activity specific. For example, desks are for work; the rug is for play; the large table is for group discussion; and the time-out corner is for cooling off and thinking. This helps the students develop constructive classroom behavior habits and reduces confusion over what behavior is expected at a given place and time.
7. Check activity-specific areas for appropriate space, lighting, storage, and furniture needs.
8. Remove everything from the room that is not absolutely necessary.
9. Make furniture and materials accessible to students in order to increase productivity and decrease anger and frustration.
10. Actively enforce the rule that people are not for hurting.

Providing children with a sense of psychological safety is included in the section on trust. The following anecdote, however, provides a vivid picture of how important a sense of safety is to these students.

> "OK. Quickly now, group! What are our class rules?"
>
> Kevin yells, "No fighting."
>
> I ignore him and without looking at anyone I raise my hand. As Kevin gets the hint and raises his own hand, I call on him. "Kevin, thank you for raising your hand."
>
> "No fighting."

"That's true, Kevin. We don't want fighting in here. But our rules tell us what we *do* want. What rule tells us the appropriate behavior?"

"Keep hands, feet, and other objects to yourself."

"All right, Kevin. Here's your penny for a correct answer. Anyone else?"

Tomika's hand shoots up as she sees the play money being handed out.

"Yes, Tomika?"

"Raise your hand and wait to be called on."

"Terrific!" I flip a penny into her bank. We're on a roll.

From the review of classroom rules, we move quickly to a question-and-answer session on calendar skills. My aide, Ms. Agnew, is usually busy getting attendance, breakfast and lunch money, and homework papers sorted. The brief 10- to 15-minute question-and-answer session before breakfast helps orient the children each morning.

In spite of average or better IQs, these children frequently lack the most basic information about days, months, and seasons. Daily, structured drills on naming, recognizing, ordering, and classifying such information using word and picture card cues works better than a concentrated unit taught over a shorter period of time.

"You all are going to break my bank! With so many correct answers I'm almost out of pennies. Who would like to trade 5 pennies for a nickel?"

"Thank you for raising your hand, Tommy. Here you are."

"There you go, Tomika."

"Thank you, Marcus."

"All right, Lydel, Kevin, and Johnathan."

"OK, as I call your name, you may go one at a time to be seated at the big table in the cooking area. Ms. Agnew has breakfast ready for you. Remember to select a chair and stay in that chair. Getting up to change seats will result in having to come back to your desk. Kevin, you're our leader today, so you may go first."

Kevin moves quickly to the table and takes a seat after washing his hands.

"Tomika, you may go now. I really like the way you have been sitting quietly and remembering to raise your hand."

Out of the corner of my eye I see Lydel getting up. As I turn toward him, I see that his eyes are glazed. He is heading for Marcus, but I step between them. "Lydel, please sit down."

"Get away, Bitch. You ain't no teacher to me. Move or I'll . . . ."

"Lydel, you have until the count of 3 to be in your seat. One . . . two . . . ."

As I start to count, he turns toward his desk. My room has no call button. I rarely need to call for the principal. But when I do, I must send a student or my aide. Lydel has learned from past experiences with me that I do not allow people to hurt each other, themselves, or me if I can stop it. He knows I only restrain as a last resort, but that I will do it as a safety measure.

By the time I get to three, he is sitting in his desk. His fists are clenched and his face is tense and angry, but his eyes are clearer now.

"I can see that your muscles are tight. I appreciate your decision to sit instead of doing something inappropriate. That was a good choice!"

"Tommy, you can wash your hands and sit at the big table now. Johnathan, when Tommy is finished, you have permission to get up."

I let Ms. Agnew supervise breakfast while I turn my attention to Marcus and Lydel.

Lydel has voices that tell him when someone is going to hurt him. The voices have absolutely nothing to do with what is really happening in the room at the time. But Marcus likes to stick his middle finger up at people in inconspicuous ways just to start trouble. When these two are involved, I'm never sure how it all *really* started until we talk.

Once a fight actually occurs, it makes no difference who started it. Both students receive the same consequence if neither student attempted to stop the fight, but knowing how a problem started is helpful in planning avoidance strategies. That is why we talk.

It turns out this time that Lydel heard voices. Lydel tells me that his "protection" told him to beat up Marcus.

Marcus is rewarded with bonus points for staying quiet and seated. Letting an adult handle such a situation is a giant step forward for him. Lydel is told that voice or no voice, fighting is out. The decision to sit on the count of "three" was excellent. Because of that decision, no time out is necessary. But he does earn zeros on his point card for that time period. I make a note to myself to call Lydel's aunt and the mental health clinic about his medication.

As Marcus and Lydel join the others, breakfast is under way.

The section that follows deals with trust and psychological safety. All of these components are so vitally interrelated that it is difficult to separate them even for discussion. It is crucial for adults who work with these children to understand the importance of each component from the point of view of the child.

## TRUST

Trust and psychological safety are inseparable. In order for a child to learn effectively as a member of a classroom group, a sense of trust and safety in self and others must be established.

Because children with behavior problems are often low on impulse control, a highly structured, predictable routine is a prerequisite to their developing a sense of trust.

A daily schedule is a good technique for behavior management. When establishing a schedule with a new group, adjustments may be needed during the first month. Each group has its own rhythm and personality. A balance between whole group instruction and independent study must be made based on the group's abilities and needs. Once a schedule is established, however, make every effort to follow it. Students develop a sense of trust in the teacher and in themselves when their daily routines are predictable.

When a balanced, predictable schedule is established in conjunction with a clearly defined, consistently executed behavior management system, students begin building trust.

Following are some suggestions for establishing trust in the classroom:

1. Be as good as your word. If a treat, punishment, special activity, or assignment under the teacher's control is promised, follow through. Children with behavior problems distrust even the best excuse a teacher gives.
2. Do not use intimidating actions or statements as a form of behavior control. While young children may respond out of fear, the price of such intimidation is high. The message teachers send by using intimidation tactics is that it's OK to frighten smaller, less physically capable people into submission. Older students are more apt to become physically aggressive toward a threatening adult.
3. Deal with noncompliant behavior consistently.
4. Make sure rewards and punishments relate logically to the student's actions.
5. Use punishment as a tool of instruction rather than revenge.
6. Be honest with students.
7. Prepare students in advance for any changes. Substitute teachers, visitors, new classmates, schedule changes, fire drills, and even holiday vacations can catch students by surprise and cause an escalation of negative behavior. Talking about such events ahead of time and having a plan for dealing with them increases students' sense of self-control and trust.
8. As the students are ready, enlist them in some of the decision making in the classroom. If a weekly art or cooking activity is part of the schedule, allow the students to choose which activity they want to do. Giving them increasing opportunities to make appropriate choices increases their sense of trust, control, and positive regard for the rights of others.
9. Use language that conveys acceptance and trust. Have students describe what they can do. De-emphasize what they cannot do.
10. Structure academic assignments for success. Students know when they are working below their ability level. Real feelings of accomplishment will not develop if lessons are too easy. Moving too quickly may be discouraging. Move students along academically by structuring the introduction of new concepts in small, digestible bits. For example, when introducing equivalent fractions, use different colored construction paper strips first. For a day or two, have students "play" with the strips to find out how many pinks equal a blue, and so forth. Color names are easier to talk about at first. After the students are comfortable with the concept, introduce the math words: "Two pinks equal one blue, or two fourths equal one half."

    In *every* subject area, use manipulative materials, art, and music at every opportunity to help students bridge the gaps between concrete and abstract concepts. In science, use experiments and models. In math, use manipulatives. In social studies, use models, 3-D maps and globes, art, and music. In reading and language, use charts, models, art, and music. Active participation not only improves academic achievement, but also captures students' interest, thereby preventing behavior problems that occur due to frustration, boredom, or dislike of an assignment.
11. Review the day's events each morning before beginning academic lessons. If a substitute will be handling a class one day, discuss this with the students and prepare them for the change. If an assembly or some other event will alter the usual math or reading

time, explain that. Even older students will resist changes if they come as a surprise. A little grumbling first thing in the morning is easier to deal with than a blow-up later.

Elements of the process of establishing trust are highlighted as the anecdotal illustration continues to unfold.

"OK, people, this is how the day looks. We will have our usual morning schedule. Recess, for those who have earned it, will begin at the second bell."

"Who remembers what special class we have on Tuesdays?"

"Tomika?"

"Music."

"Right. And who is the music teacher?"

"Tommy?"

"Um . . . um . . . Mrs. Smythe?"

"You remembered! Thank you, Tommy. We will go to music at our usual time today. When we get back to the room, we will have classroom store. Keep that in mind as you answer questions, complete assignments, and walk in line. Every little bit adds up."

Breakfast and academic periods run smoothly this morning, but I begin to sense a triangle of tension brewing among Kevin, Marcus, and Johnathan. I know Kevin is jealous of Johnathan's mainstreaming success. Kevin has been with me longer and feels that he is entitled to more privileges even if his behavior does not consistently warrant it. Johnathan's growing sense of self-respect no longer allows insults to collapse his resolve. I silently applaud his decision to stand up for himself, but I am also aware of my responsibility to help Johnathan learn acceptable ways of asserting himself.

As the second bell rings, Ms. Agnew and I call the students to the line one at a time. Everyone has earned a 15-minute break by completing assignments and acting appropriately. Our little group is the only one on the playground at this time. Having recess with the rest of the school would be too disruptive.

Ms. Agnew and I chat as the children climb the monkey bars, run, and roll in the grass. Recess is usually a relaxing time for all of us.

I have a message from the office to take a phone call. Normally, I don't leave a whole group alone with my aide, but I know Ms. Dodd, the social worker, is on her way, so I leave. The call is from the special education office. We will be getting a new student next week.

As I turn down the sidewalk to our recess area, Kevin runs at top speed toward me, holding his eye and screaming.

"My eye! My eye! Where were you, Bitch? Get away. You ain't no teacher to me. This wouldn't have happened if you were out there. Oh . . . Oh . . . ."

By this time, Kevin is on his back, rolling from side to side, kicking his feet, and holding his left eye. Each attempt to check the severity of his injury is met with another round of insults. I finally convince Kevin to walk back to the classroom with me. Ms. Dodd, Ms. Agnew, and the rest of the class are waiting outside the students' restroom. Johnathan's fair-skinned face is flushed, and sweat is dripping

from his hairline. He will not make eye contact, and his fists are clenched, indicating that he was involved.

Marcus has his back to all of us, arms crossed against his muscular chest, and foot tapping furiously.

Tomika, Lydel, and Tommy show varying degrees of either amusement or disinterest.

I ask Ms. Dodd to get Kevin some ice and help Ms. Agnew with our usual story time.

Kevin, Johnathan, Marcus, and I have some serious problem solving to do.

Before I begin talking about the incident with the boys, Ms. Agnew tells me that she hadn't noticed anything happening until she heard Johnathan screaming. From what she could see, Kevin had been making fun of Johnathan. Johnathan screamed at Kevin to shut up and threatened to punch him if he didn't. Kevin kept it up and laughed. Before Ms. Agnew could get to them, Marcus, who had been watching from a few yards away, took a running start and plowed full force into Kevin. Kevin was so startled by Marcus's surprise attack that he didn't have time to react before Marcus had punched him in the eye, jumped up, and taken off running for the fence.

By this time, Ms. Dodd had arrived. She went to talk Marcus out of climbing over the fence and running away. Ms. Agnew tried to comfort Kevin, but when she saw that he was determined to find me, she let him go and turned her attention to the other students.

All of this happened within a few short minutes.

Armed with the facts, I am ready to problem solve with each boy and plan ahead for the group. Teaching these boys to accept each other is a priority.

## ACCEPTANCE

It is important to accept children's differing abilities, temperaments, and personal strengths and weaknesses. Also, acceptance of the limitations of the environment; co-workers; county, state, and federal guidelines; available resources; and the number of hours in a day means informed, healthy recognition. Acceptance is not to be confused with blind compliance, approval, or resignation.

To the students, a teacher's acceptance of them means that he or she continues to be fair, consistent, and professional even when they have tested his or her tolerance unmercifully. To co-workers, acceptance means a willingness to provide mutual support. To supervisors, acceptance means getting all of the paperwork done on time in spite of its monotony. With regard to the environment and available resources, acceptance means creative utilization of everyone and everything possible.

To the individual teacher, acceptance means being aware of personal strengths and weaknesses. Take time out to rest and relax and to learn. Teaching requires a great deal of mental and emotional stamina. Be alert to signs of personal stress. Take the signs seriously.

In the classroom, acceptance of the students by the teacher leads to acceptance by the students of each other and themselves. Positive, observable ways to convey acceptance are included in the following list:

1. Have bulletin board space in the room with each child's name on it for the display of artwork and academic papers.
2. Distribute notes to the children describing positive behavior you have noticed during the day, week, or month.
3. Make occasional phone calls or home visits to parents to discuss positive behavior.
4. Use words to describe unacceptable behavior. Refrain from using words that attack the child's sense of self-worth. For example you might say, "I do not like it when I see you kicking the chair. Tell me how you feel with words." This statement reflects respect for the child while describing the undesirable behavior. An ineffective statement might be, "Quit acting like a baby. I'm sick of having you disrupt this class."
5. Recognize students with a card, cake, or special activity on their birthdays.
6. Have a regularly scheduled time each day or week to discuss positive things the students have noticed about each other. In the beginning, model and define the appropriate responses. Structure the discussion around a specific theme such as academic strengths, work habits, or talents.
7. When a class is having difficulty accepting other classmates due to their inappropriate behavior, give them time to vent their feelings in an appropriate way by having them list specific behaviors they dislike. Respect their right to feel the way they do. Then enlist their cooperation in helping the ostracized student or students become part of the group. Rewarding the class for responding appropriately to the student who is acting inappropriately, along with repeating the discussion process as needed, strengthens the class's tolerance for disruptive behavior. They quickly learn to remain in control in spite of another's actions. Problems do not escalate as quickly, are resolved more efficiently, and take less time away from instruction.
8. Admit your own mistakes or limitations. Not everyone is an expert at everything. "I don't know," "Let's find out together," or "I'm sorry I snapped at you a moment ago" are phrases that show self-acceptance. Modeling self-acceptance is one way of teaching it to the students.
9. Mistakes are a valuable part of the learning process. Teach students to accept mistakes as a way of gaining information rather than as proof of their decreased value as human beings. Use nonthreatening activities such as jigsaw puzzles, pencil and paper mazes, and games that use clues to illustrate that through trial and error, correct responses can be learned. Relate this to other social and academic situations.
10. Ask students to talk positively about themselves at least once a day using sentence starters such as the following:

    I like myself because _____.
    I am good at _____.
    I handled _____ well today.
    I learned _____ today.
    I improved at _____ today.
    I feel great when I _____.
    I have a talent for _____.
    I'm a good friend because _____.
    My best subject is _____.
    People like the way I _____.

Keeping an awareness of the power of acceptance during the stresses involved in managing a class of children with behavior problems is difficult. The following anecdotal section reflects many of the techniques discussed in this section.

After lunch, we prepare to go to Ms. Smythe's class for music. Because special education classes are small and enrichment teachers' loads are large, our class joins a regular education class for weekly music instruction.

While Tomika has nothing against music, she hates Ms. Smythe, the music teacher. Ms. Smythe insists on touching Tomika even though Tomika has said very clearly that she does not want to be touched.

Before being placed in my room, Tomika had Ms. Smythe for music at another school. It took two adults to pry Tomika's fingers from around Ms. Smythe's neck during one lesson.

"I see everyone is sitting quietly. Are there any questions before we go to Ms. Smythe's class for music?"

Tomika turns backward in her chair and starts tapping her feet loudly on the tile floor.

"Tomika, I know you don't like Ms. Smythe."

Tomika spins around to face me. Her body is tense as she begins to talk.

"I'm not going. I hate her! She's mean and ugly. I'm not going, and you can't make me!"

I walk closer to Tomika's desk and kneel in front of it.

"Tomika, no one is going to try to make you go. The decision is yours. I know you hate Ms. Smythe. She touches you when you don't want her to. It's OK not to like someone. If you decide not to go, you can stay here with Ms. Agnew. You will not earn points, because you will not be in your assigned area. But you will earn work sign-offs if you complete work while the class is at music. If you go with us, I promise to stay right by your side to help you. You will earn points, and you will earn an extra quarter to use in the classroom store if you are appropriate with Ms. Smythe. It's up to you, Tomika."

Tomika squirms a little in her chair. Having a good point card is important to her. Earning money for our classroom store is also very reinforcing. Tears fill her eyes. She hasn't seen Ms. Smythe since the last time she tried to strangle her.

"OK, I'll go. Where's the quarter?"

"Right here. I'll keep it in my hand the whole time we're there so you can see it."

"Will you promise to sit right with me?"

"Tomika, I won't leave your side. If it looks like things are getting too hard, we'll leave. OK?"

"OK," Tomika replies in a small, timid voice very unlike her usual loud, aggressive front.

The class senses Tomika's tension and is quieter than usual on the walk to Ms. Smythe's room. We manage to get seated before she arrives. As she walks into the room, Tomika grabs my hand and holds on for dear life.

"You! . . . Yes, you over there!" Ms. Smythe is shaking her finger at a boy who usually acts silly during her lessons but is sitting quietly at the moment. "I just want you to know right now, young man, that I won't be putting up with your foolishness today." Ms. Smythe's speech goes on for a few more minutes, detailing sins of the past. So much for positive reinforcement. A once-calm classroom is gearing up for the very trouble Ms. Smythe is predicting.

When Ms. Smythe spots Tomika, I become wary. I have second thoughts about putting Tomika through so much this soon. Ms. Smythe walks straight back to where Tomika and I are sitting. Here we go—ready or not.

"Hello, Tomika," Ms. Smythe begins in a sweet, high-pitched voice. "Do you remember me?"

Tomika does her best to become one with the chair she is sitting in as she nods, "Yes" without making eye contact.

I can see how tense, angry, and panicked Tomika is. When she looks at me, I smile a little, show her the quarter and whisper, "You're doing great."

Ms. Smythe can't leave it at that. She seems determined to bring out the worst in Tomika.

"Well, dear, I'm so glad that you're here." Her words do not match her tone. "And look at the adorable little dress you have on." Ms. Smythe starts lifting the skirt hem slightly, patting Tomika's knee and touching her sleeves.

Tomika makes a few small squeaks. Every muscle in her body looks ready to explode. But she holds on. With all her might, she works to control the urge to lash out violently.

I, too, feel angry and have my own impulses to deal with. Ms. Smythe and I have discussed Tomika privately. I have explained Tomika's need for taking things slowly. Why must she goad the child into a problem? So many of the other teachers are willing to learn ways of helping.

Ms. Smythe looks at me in amazement. The test is over. Tomika has neither cursed nor attacked Ms. Smythe. As Ms. Smythe goes on with her lesson, I whisper to Tomika about how proud I am of her. She has made excellent decisions. She has shown appropriate behavior in spite of extreme anger. I wanted to hug her.

Within 3 months, Tomika is volunteering to help Ms. Smythe as well as initiating contact with hugs and asking to hold her hand as they walk. I have never dreamed things would go so well. Yeah, Tomika!

The elements of limit setting, safety, trust, and acceptance create an environment that is safe physically and emotionally. Once that is accomplished, children are capable of benefiting from instruction.

## SENSE OF PURPOSE

A sense of purpose can go a long way in helping groups build on positive, constructive activities and avoid time-consuming problems. Students bring many negatively charged preconceptions about themselves, teachers, and schools into the room. Letting students know from the beginning that the classroom is a place to learn, that there is a job to do, and that appropriate participation in learning activities is expected saves

time. Many of the "I can't," "Make me," and "Forget you" reactions can be avoided with careful attention to details.

The following techniques can be adapted to provide a sense of purpose to both younger and older students:

1. Tape work sign-off sheets to students' desks, folders, or bulletin board areas. Preferred activities during the day or week are contingent upon completion of work. The sign-off sheet can be used as a record of completed assignments. The teacher or aide can put one initial for completion of half of an assignment and both initials for completing a full assignment.
2. Structure lessons as closely as possible to resemble those in regular education classes. Weekly spelling tests are one example of activities that students in regular classes are required to perform. Word lists can be selected with success in mind by limiting the number or type of words chosen each week.
3. Grade papers and record the grades. Expect corrections to be made if work is incorrect. Special activities cannot be earned if work is not corrected.
4. Keep an ongoing, whole group project of some kind in progress at all times. Building a model town for social studies, typing a student newspaper for language arts, producing a "rap" tape, or constructing science models are just a few ways to keep academics alive while providing a social activity for focusing energy and enthusiasm. Protect group projects when the class is not working on them. Lock them in a cabinet or closet. Otherwise, an angry child might attempt to destroy all or part of the group project, setting off a chain reaction in the whole group.
5. Help students set realistic academic goals. Keep charts of their progress. A bulletin board or special folder can be used to display the progress charts. Keep positive evidence of the students' ability to learn posted for times when motivation or self-esteem needs an honest boost.

A sense of purpose can keep the class moving in the right direction during academic instruction as well as during times of transition. The following anecdotal section illustrates how a group's sense of purpose helps the group prepare for a new student. Aspects of limit setting, safety, trust, and acceptance are also evident.

> By the afternoon, Ms. Dodd has gathered more information about our newest arrival. In 2 days, 8-year-old Jason will be joining our group. Physical aggression, profanity, and a lack of respect for authority in such a young child is hard to understand.
>
> Ms. Dodd asks, "Are you sure you want this one?"
>
> "Yes, I'm ready. I'll just wear my boots and eat my Wheaties."
>
> Preparing the class for a newcomer is my first job. The class helps me get a desk, bulletin board space, point chart, and other materials ready for him. We talk while we do this.
>
> "How old is he?"
>
> "Does he like to fight?"
>
> "Is he black or white?"
>
> "Does he like to fight?"

"Is he smart or retarded?"

"Does he like to fight?"

"Is he strong?"

"Does he like to fight?"

"Will you still help us or will you just help him 'cause he's new?"

"Does he like to fight?"

"Will he have to earn his points to cook, too?"

"Does he like to fight?"

On and on, the questions never seem to end. A new student means a new power hierarchy within the group. They'll be watching me and each other for every slight sign of real or imagined favoritism or antagonism. Fighting is this group's favorite way of settling things, so questions about fighting continue to dominate our conversations.

As our efforts to provide Jason with a comfortable welcome are completed, I gather the group for our final discussion before Jason's arrival the next morning.

"You have done a terrific job of getting things ready for Jason. Tomika and Tommy have decorated a welcome banner. Marcus helped get his desk in order and put tape on the floor around it. Johnathan and Lydel fixed a bulletin board display area for his work. And Kevin helped Ms. Agnew run off charts and worksheets for him. You have each earned extra bonus points and a treat for working so nicely together. Thank you! Now, one last time. How can we help Jason tomorrow? Kevin?"

"Say hello. Don't laugh or say inappropriate things to him."

"OK, I like that, Kevin."

"Tomika?"

"If he says something to us we don't like, ignore him."

Marcus jumps up with, "Not me! I'll knock him out if he bothers me."

"That would not be a good decision, Marcus. What will happen if you decide to do that?"

"I'll smash the sucker, that's what."

"And, if you choose that behavior, Marcus, what will you earn?"

"I'll earn his ass and yours too if you get in my way!"

"Marcus, it's OK to be angry about Jason's coming. Getting used to someone new can be difficult. But I'm counting on you and everyone else to help me. Jason's going to be nervous. He knows that all of us already know each other. We can be friends with each other now because we've had time to work together and learn the rules. Jason will walk in here tomorrow not sure whether anyone will be his friend."

"Well, I'm not gonna be his friend."

"You might change your mind, but even if you don't, I'm hoping that you will make good decisions about how you act. Even if you're angry, the rule is still the same—*No hurting people.*"

"Tomika, thank you for raising your hand."

"Marcus, I don't know why you're being so doggish. Maybe Jason won't like you either."

Marcus starts to jump out of his chair. I move toward him with my hand raised, palm facing forward to signal stop. Marcus clenches both fists and throws himself back down on his seat.

"Tomika, it is true that Jason may decide not to like any of us. But the most important thing for us to do now is focus our attention on what we can do that will be helpful. Let's get back to our list of positive things we can do. Kevin said we could say hello. Tomika said we could ignore inappropriate behavior. Anything else? Tommy?"

"Help him learn where to go."

"OK, Tommy. I like that suggestion. Since you're our leader tomorrow, will you help Jason learn his way around?"

"Yeah."

"Thank you, Tommy. Anyone else? Lydel?"

"Tell him about earning money and our store."

"Right, Lydel. He needs to know about the good things we have here."

"Johnathan, you've been so quiet. Do you have any suggestions?"

"I just think we should be nice to him. I was so afraid my first day. I still get afraid in regular class sometimes 'cause I don't know the other kids yet. I just think we should be friends."

"Yeah. And what if he kicks you in the butt! You gonna be his friend then?"

"Marcus, that's enough!"

"I like the way most of you are willing to give Jason a chance. He might be quiet the first few days or he might start acting up right away. Whichever way he acts, he'll be trying to find out about us. We have a responsibility to set a good example for him."

"But, why is he coming to our class?"

"Do you mean, why is he in a class for students with behavior problems?"

"Yeah. What did he do bad?"

"Jason needs extra help learning to follow directions and learning to handle his anger appropriately."

"He's not retarded, is he?"

"No, Kevin, he's not retarded. We've talked about all the different types of special education. None of you is retarded. Retardation is nothing to make fun of, though. Who remembers what it means to have a mental disability?"

"It means that it takes you longer to learn stuff."

"Right. What does *gifted* mean?"

"It means you learn stuff real fast."

"OK, what does *learning disabled* mean?"

"It means that you're really smart, but you have trouble with one or two things."

"And what about *behavior disordered*? Does that mean that you are crazy or have a mental disability?"

All of them in unison scream, "No-o-o-o-o-o!"

"That's right! What does it mean, Tomika?"

"It means that we need extra help learning how to behave."

"OK. So, Jason is like that, too. Are we going to help him?"

"Yeah!"

"Yeah!"

That yeah was unanimous. Even Marcus joined in the chorus.

Minor scrimmages may be on the horizon, but the first battle is over. We're on our way.

# 3

# Scheduling

Scheduling can be one of the most difficult aspects of the job to control. Many students have multiple disabilities requiring "pull-outs" during the day for speech therapy, physical therapy, or personal counseling. One or more students may be mainstreamed for all or part of the day. Physical education, music, art, and library time may also add to scheduling difficulties.

Many scheduling details are beyond the control of the teacher. Once a skeleton schedule of the typical week for each student and the group as a whole is established, the teacher can set up a workable instruction plan.

If students come into the classroom one at a time on their own in the morning, a quiet, highly structured activity that requires no teacher assistance is best. Copying spelling words; writing in a personal journal; copying a weekly poem, song, or recipe; doing math facts drills; matching patterns; illustrating a "thought of the day"; and solving an academically oriented puzzle are all possibilities.

If students enter the room together, a highly structured question-and-answer period before starting lessons can help them make the transition from the bus to the classroom.

Students need an introductory period every morning to review the rules in a positive manner, discuss the day's activities, and prepare for any unexpected changes.

As the daily schedule proceeds, strike a balance between individual and group activities. Whole group activities such as academic discussions, experiments, cooking, art, music, PE, and lunch can easily become overstimulating for some students. However, isolation does not allow the students to learn more appropriate social behavior.

Expecting more self-control than the students are capable of reinforces negative self-concepts. Follow active periods with quiet, highly structured activities. Keep alternate plans for any activity in mind. Always having high-interest, self-structuring activities available can give the teacher and ultimately the students a sense of purpose, control, and security.

The following daily schedule illustrates the process of blending academic and behavioral needs:

| *Time* | *Suggested Independent Activities* | |
|---|---|---|
| 8:00-8:15 | Monday | Academically oriented puzzle on a seasonal or holiday theme. |
| | Tuesday | Copy and illustrate a Thought for the Week. |
| | Wednesday | Copy and illustrate a seasonal or holiday poem or song of the week. |
| | Thursday | Copy spelling words 5–10 times each in preparation for the practice test. |
| | Friday | Copy the weekly recipe for the cooking activity. |
| 8:15–8:30 | Attendance and opening announcements.<br>Briefly review class rules and the day's activities at this time. | |
| 8:30–8:40 | Rapid-fire oral drill of calendar or math skills. | |
| 8:40–8:45 | One-minute timed minimath test.<br>Students drill math facts by taking a 1-minute written test on 20 facts at a time. | |
| 8:45–9:00 | Whole group practice and instruction. | |
| 9:00–9:30 | Independent skill practice using individualized materials. Facts missed on the 1-minute minitest can be written 10 times each, illustrated, or practiced with worksheets at this time. Facts practice also makes a good homework assignment. | |
| 9:30–9:45 | Bathroom breaks and recess or a stretch break. | |
| 9:45–10:00 | Rapid-fire oral word card drill.<br>Make it fun by awarding points for each correct answer. For talk-outs, erase one point. Each student can have a different set of cards and still participate in the group game to accommodate differing ability levels. For groups that may be hesitant to participate, a student who tries but is incorrect could receive one point. A student who tries and is correct could earn two points. For oral drill of word attack skills, use cubes with consonants, consonant blends, and/or vowels on them. Students can earn points by thinking of words that start, end, or have the same vowel sound as the letters that come up when the cube is rolled. | |
| 10:00–10:30 | Independent reading practice. | |
| 10:30–10:40 | Orally correct two to four incorrectly written sentences. Students recite rules to justify the changes as the teacher makes corrections on the chalkboard. | |
| 10:40–10:50 | Whole group prewriting activity.<br>Examples: (1) Make word walls of words that relate to a given topic. (2) Read a brief story starter and discuss possible characters, setting, and plot. (3) Discuss events from a recent movie or field trip. (4) Brainstorm creative ideas. | |
| 10:50–11:15 | Independent writing. | |
| 11:15–11:30 | Partners edit and share writings. | |

| | |
|---|---|
| 11:30–12:00 | Lunch, bathroom break, and a brief evaluation of morning behavior and academic achievement. |
| 12:00–12:15 | Alternate read aloud periods with silent reading periods. |
| 12:15–12:45 | Science. |
| 12:45–1:15 | Social studies. |
| 1:15–1:30 | Recess and bathroom breaks. |
| 1:30–1:45 | Sing together or listen to music to cool down. |
| 1:45–2:15 | Affective lesson.<br>Use this time to review behavior goals, individual's and group's progress, and group issues. One day per week can be devoted to a reward activity such as art or cooking. This activity can be earned by achieving a weekly behavior goal or by completing a predetermined amount of work academically.<br><br>Weekly Plans could look like this: |

| | |
|---|---|
| Monday | Discussion to plan week's events. |
| Tuesday | Discussion of a whole group problem or need. |
| Wednesday | Feeling journals—Enter and share. |
| Thursday | Target behavior update for individual behavior goals. |
| Friday | Reward activity for students who earned it. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2:15–2:30 | Clean-up. Total point cards. Chart points. |
| 2:30 | Dismiss students. |

The consistent use of routines along with skillful balancing of activities can go a long way in establishing and maintaining classroom order. Jason's first day in class illustrates the effectiveness of following an established plan.

As I get to my room to organize myself before the buses roll in, I find Ms. Dodd waiting with Jason.

"Hello, Ms. Dodd. Jason, I'm so glad to meet you!"

Ms. Dodd gives me a warning glance as I move toward them.

"Jason, I'd like to show you your seat."

"Shut up you white ass, snot-sucking, honky bitch!"

"Ms. Dodd, have you and Jason had a chance to look around?"

"No. We've only been here a few minutes."

"Well, the class really worked hard to get things ready for you, Jason. This is your desk. We have a bulletin board space for you over here, and your point sheets and charts will be kept in this folder."

"Who gives a shit?"

"I'd also like to show you what your points will earn."

Each time I point to a store item, he mutters another string of profanity. His eyes are glued to every move I make, so for now I ignore his words.

After a brief introduction to our classroom standards and routines, I leave Ms. Dodd and Jason to wait for the class on the bus ramp.

Jason certainly curses proficiently. Most kids wait a day or two before showing me how they earned their behavior disorder status. This initial "honeymoon" period gives me time to let them receive some positive attention from me before I have to seem mean in their eyes. Jason is determined to make it impossible for me to put money in his bank either literally or figuratively. Without some positives, however, we're nothing more than sparring partners. And what about the class? Jason is definitely not on a campaign to win friends. I'm glad I wore boots today. I feel ankle-kicking, toe-stomping tantrums in the air.

The class files into the room more quietly than usual today. I invite Jason to join us at his desk. He refuses.

"Jason, you may sit with Ms. Dodd for now if you like, but you will not earn points or money till you come to your seat." I might as well establish limits now. He isn't wasting any time showing me his anger; I won't waste any time letting him know where I stand.

"Don't even look at me, you wide-eyed whore! I don't give a shit about your points or your money."

The class looks at me to see what will happen.

"Thank you, class, for waiting patiently while I explain the rules to Jason. Here's a bonus nickel for each of you for being so appropriate. I'm sure when Jason is ready he'll join us."

The usual rapid-fire question-and-answer period begins. After a few minutes, Jason gets so caught up in the spirit of the game that he raises his hand to answer a question.

"Jason, I'd love to call on you, but you need to be in your seat first."

His hand slides down to his lap as he tries to decide what to do. With the whole class watching, he's under too much pressure to respond, so I continue our morning game with the others.

Jason quietly slips into his assigned seat just before we finish our calendar skills.

"Thank you for coming to your seat, Jason. Here's your dime for being in your assigned area and a penny if you can tell me what month we're in now."

"January."

"Absolutely right! There you are."

As I walk to the wall calendar, Jason tips his bank forward to see his money and smiles. Ms. Dodd gives me the thumbs-up sign from the back of the room as she leaves. I breathe a deep and very thankful sigh of relief.

# 4

# Interventions

Everything a teacher does in the course of a school day, from room arrangement and lesson planning to directly interacting with the students, is potentially an intervention. When problems arise, take time to analyze the situation. The easiest interventions to institute are ones, such as the following, that involve the environment.

1. Move the desks farther apart.
2. Use tape lines to designate activity-specific areas.
3. Use visual barriers where they are needed. File cabinets, rolling chalkboards, and book shelves are possibilities.
4. Increase or decrease the amount of lighting.
5. Put unnecessary items out of sight and, if possible, out of reach.
6. Organize materials for greater ease of use.
7. Adjust the schedule for a better balance of whole group and individual instruction.
8. Adjust the lessons to meet instructional and interest levels.
9. Adjust the materials to the needs and interests of the students. For instance, one child might hate to write, but would willingly do the same work if he or she could cut and paste the appropriate responses on a worksheet from a list of possible responses. Similarly, crayons might be considered too infantile by another child. That child could use markers, colored pencils, or colored chalk. The Appendix includes sample worksheets that illustrate alternate ways to have a student practice the same skill.
10. Adjust the temperature of the room.
11. Adjust the height of visual aids.
12. Adjust tables, desks, and chairs to appropriate levels.
13. Divide assignments into two or more parts. Some students are able to handle two small worksheets with 10 problems on each page, but will have a tantrum if given one full worksheet with 20 problems on it. The work sign-off sheet in the Appendix is especially adaptable to this intervention. The teacher can use two initials to represent completion of a whole assignment. Before the student begins working, he or she can be told that there are two short assignments and that one initial will be awarded for each correctly completed part. This also works well for listening activities followed by written work. The students can receive one initial for actively listening and one for the written section.

*Active listening* needs to be defined as sitting appropriately, making eye contact, and talking only at appropriate times. Review this definition with the students as often as necessary.

When environmental and instructional changes fail to eliminate a problem, individualized intervention plans can be used to meet specific children's needs. While teaching academic skills and concepts, the teacher must also keep eyes and ears alert for signs of stress in students. Sometimes simply moving closer to a student who is off task or upset can help bring the student's attention back to the immediate task. Giving a student a private signal to remember can also help. For example, when other students aren't around, tell a student that you will pull on your ear when you see him or her getting upset. That will be the cue to calm down or to pull his or her own ear to let you know that everything is OK. Nonverbal cues used in this way can set up a positive way to interact with specific students without interrupting instruction.

Another technique for helping with self-control is to give a student something to do in another area before a real problem begins. For example, when the student is getting irritated with another student who is name-calling, ask the student who is being appropriate but getting irritated to take a note to the office.

Talking to students in a nonthreatening way, keeping them aware of their choices in any given situation, and focusing their attention on the appropriate decisions they are making even in the midst of a problem can help calm them down.

Avoid power struggles by making it clear that their behavior is under their control. A student who says "I'm not going to do this work and you can't make me" needs to hear "Whether you work or not is your decision. If you decide to work, you will earn _____. If you decide not to work, you will earn _____. You decide what you want to earn."

Individual contracts can work within the context of the whole group plan. Keep any individual contract balanced with the total needs and abilities of the group. Students will be quick to point out unfair advantages or disadvantages.

For a student who frequently talks out or gets out of his or her seat without permission, a pocket on the desk with strips of construction paper in it can help in self-monitoring the targeted behavior. Determine how many times a specific behavior occurs in a given time period. If the average for the morning is 12, put 10 strips of paper in the student's desk pocket. Each time the behavior occurs, pull a strip out of the pocket or have the student do it. For each strip left in the pocket by the end of the specified time period, the student will earn a reward. Decrease the number of strips the student starts with each period as the student's behavior improves.

Another type of individual contract entails giving a student parts of a picture of a desired item to paste together as he or she masters increasingly difficult goals. When the picture is complete, the student earns whatever is pictured. Ladders, stepping stones, staircases, and tower designs with places for stickers that represent steps toward achievement can also be used. Samples of other individual contracts are provided in the Appendix.

Whole group interventions will meet the needs of most students most of the time. Incorporate classroom structure, scheduling, limit setting, and an established sense of purpose with an overall classroom behavior management plan.

Point cards, play money, tokens, work sign-off sheets, bonus points, a classroom store, checkbooks, savings accounts, cooking, art and music activities, and time-out are all tools of the trade.

General guidelines include the following:

1. Keep it simple, clear, and concrete.
2. Make all positives contingent on appropriate behavior.
3. Keep students' responsibility and power of choice at the core of each part of the plan.

The classroom behavior management plan shown on pages 30 and 31 is a sample of one used in a public school. In this classroom, play money is used. One point on a daily card equals one cent. Students keep banks on their desks made from empty milk cartons. Each month the students decorate new ones with seasonal designs. Bonus points are awarded with coins. Students count their money at the end of each day. Touching someone else's bank results in the contents of the offender's bank being emptied, with an opportunity to earn the money back with exceptional behavior. Also, playing with your own money would result in that money's being taken.

The classroom store is open every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoon. Each student's balance is kept in a savings account on a section of the chalkboard. Checks are written from the account on store days. The addition and subtraction for the account are done by each student before the student receives selected store items. Students are permitted to save money if they do not have enough to buy a desired item. Lay-a-way plans are also permitted as long as the student has enough money to make a payment each store day.

The plan includes point card procedures, recordkeeping of daily points, target behaviors, work sign-off sheets, bonus point procedures, ways to earn special activities, a menu of reinforcers, a menu of consequences, and ways to earn mainstreaming. This is a sample—a springboard for creative ideas.

The school system this plan was used in had no system-wide plan for mainstreaming students. There were no special centers for the most severely affected students either. This plan was developed to meet the needs of the whole group while still focusing attention on individual students' needs. Students who might have needed restraining had permission to restrain written under "Additions." Any medical needs were also included there. At least one legal guardian, the teacher, and one other staff member read and signed each child's behavior plan. Copies were given to parents, doctors, and counselors upon request.

Page 32 shows a sample point sheet. Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, printed in the horizontal blocks at the top, correspond to the goals printed vertically to the right of the blocks. The teacher may decide to divide the day into time periods or subject and activity periods. Younger students seem to understand subject and activity period names better than times. Mark the sheet from right to left at the end of each time or activity period. A possible 10 points can be earned each half hour. Target behaviors must be written in by the teacher each day. Even though a student may have more than two problem behaviors, only work on two at a time. Select the most dangerous or disruptive behaviors first. Possible target behaviors might include keeping hands and feet to oneself, using an appropriate volume of voice, using words to express feelings, using an appropriate tone of voice, putting items away neatly, keeping one's personal area organized, starting assignments on time, and using appropriate words to communicate ideas and feelings.

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

Student's Name _____ Date _____

(Student's Name) is expected to improve or maintain behavior standards in three areas that are referred to as whole group standards. These three behaviors include (1) talking appropriately, (2) finishing activities on time, and (3) using materials appropriately. Based on (Student's Name) present level of functioning, the additional behaviors listed below are targeted as needs that are specific to (his/her) behavior management plan.

(Example)

1. Keep hands and feet to self.

(Example)

2. Use appropriate language to express feelings.

A point sheet will be kept daily (see attachments). Compliance with specified behaviors will result in the child's earning stickers, stamps, or stars worth two points for each of the five behaviors during each time period. A first warning will be given verbally. A second warning will result in the loss of one point. A "1" will be written on the point sheet for the specific behavior and time period applicable. Failure to comply after that will result in a "0" being placed on the point sheet for the specific behavior(s) and time period applicable. After the first verbal warning, the student may sit in a cool-off area and continue to earn points while behaving appropriately. This brief 5- to 15-minute period is meant to give the student time to calm down. After the second warning, the student may be asked to sit in an in-class suspension (ICS) area. The student will not earn points in any behavior area during the time (he/she) is required to sit there. Time-out in another room may be required if the student refuses to go to cool-off or in-class suspension. The student must complete time-out and ICS time appropriately before earning points again.

The point sheet will remain in the child's view throughout the day. Verbal praise during times of compliance will be immediate and frequent. Bonus points will be awarded with play money or written on the student's point sheet. The child will have a graphic indicator of (his/her) progress through the use of the point sheet.

At the end of each day, the teacher will tally all points earned. The child may then save (his/her) balance or cash the money in on an item or activity of choice.

The point sheet will be brought home daily. Please review it with your child, sign it, and have the child return it the next school day. Extra bonus points are earned for bringing in a signed point sheet.

The teacher and child will chart daily totals before the point sheet is sent home. The totals will not include bonus points earned during the day. When (Student's Name) has maintained a daily point score of _____ % or better for _____ consecutive weeks and is also functioning academically at a level appropriate to peers in a regular _____ grade class, (Student's Name) will earn the right to be mainstreamed for one academic subject per day. Each additional period spent in regular classes will be earned the same way.

If at any time, (Student's Name)'s behavior or academic functioning falls below the following specified levels for a _____ week period, (he/she) will return to full-time special education and begin earning mainstreaming privileges again.

Academic minimum: _____

Behavior minimum: _____

As an added incentive to earn points, a cooking activity will be provided each Friday. The number of points needed each week in order to cook will be individualized and will increase slowly as (Student's Name)'s behavior control increases. (Student's Name) will be told on Monday how many points (he/she) will need in order to cook on Friday. The class will vote on a recipe of the week each Monday.

Additions

_____

_____

_____

_____

Date _____

| Committee Members | Position |
|---|---|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

# Daily Point Sheet

Name _____

Date _____

| Times or Subjects and Activities | Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 | Goal 4 | Goal 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Goal 1 Talk appropriately
Goal 2 Complete tasks on time
Goal 3 Use materials appropriately
Goal 4 _____
Goal 5 _____

*Bonus Points*
Homework
Spelling +5
Math +5
Other
_____
_____
_____

Daily Total

Parent's Signature _____

A Weekly Point Sheet chart is shown on page 34. This chart has room for 4 weeks' worth of point sheet totals. At the end of each day, the teacher will draw a line on the chart for the correct total and day. The student will color a bar graph to illustrate his or her behavior progress. Students often like to use seasonal colors, since these charts are on a special bulletin board in the room. Students who are trying to earn mainstreaming privileges benefit from having a line drawn horizontally across the percentage area they must achieve in order to be mainstreamed.

At the end of each month, a photocopy of the chart is made for the teacher's records. Students are then permitted to take the colorful copy home. Some parents like to use these charts along with the daily point sheets to help motivate the students with rewards at home. Parents must be reminded to accentuate the positive. Periodically remind them that the point sheets and monthly charts are tools of communication. Help them see that even though a student may have low points for a particular day, he or she still may have made good choices.

The following lists of reinforcers and consequences or punishments are only a start. Ask the students what they want to earn. Be observant to detect their least favorite activities. For the plan to work, there must be things students want to avoid as well as things they want to earn.

## REINFORCERS

*Primary reinforcers* include food items and drinks. These work best with younger students and with any age when stress factors are high. Permission from parents is sometimes needed. Primary reinforcers might include the following:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Candy | Juice | Fruit |
| Crackers | Soda | Cookies |
| Cake | Pizza | Chips |
| Pretzels | Ice cream | Marshmallows |

*Secondary reinforcers* include tangible items. It is wise to discuss in advance with the students what items they prefer to avoid purchasing too much. Free samples and donations are often available. Some suggested secondary reinforcers are

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Posters | Erasers | Cars |
| Dolls | Stickers | Games |
| Notebooks | Pens | Markers |
| Sports cards | Jewelry | Clothing |
| Visors | Sunglasses | Cologne |
| Bubble bath | Caps | Silly straws |
| Nail polish | Pencils | |

## WEEKLY POINT SHEET

| | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 100 | | | | | |
| 90 | | | | | |
| 80 | | | | | |
| 70 | | | | | |
| 60 | | | | | |
| 50 | | | | | |
| 40 | | | | | |
| 30 | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | |
| Daily Score | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

Week of _____

| | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 100 | | | | | |
| 90 | | | | | |
| 80 | | | | | |
| 70 | | | | | |
| 60 | | | | | |
| 50 | | | | | |
| 40 | | | | | |
| 30 | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | |
| Daily Score | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

Week of _____

| | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 100 | | | | | |
| 90 | | | | | |
| 80 | | | | | |
| 70 | | | | | |
| 60 | | | | | |
| 50 | | | | | |
| 40 | | | | | |
| 30 | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | |
| Daily Score | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

Week of _____

| | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 100 | | | | | |
| 90 | | | | | |
| 80 | | | | | |
| 70 | | | | | |
| 60 | | | | | |
| 50 | | | | | |
| 40 | | | | | |
| 30 | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | |
| Daily Score | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

Week of _____

*Social reinforcers* are the highest level of reinforcement. It is not recommended that groups begin earning these at first unless adult supervision is always available. The students will be earning time and the right to use whatever materials are necessary. Points can be paid by the minute. For instance, 1 minute of Nintendo time could equal 5 points. The student would need 50 points in order to buy 10 minutes of playing time. Completing school work may also need to be a prerequisite to playing. Some suggested social reinforcers include

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Painting | Game time | Listening to tapes or records |
| Clay | Computer | Visiting another classroom |
| Models | Library | Helping in the office |
| Coloring | Films | Playing outside |

## OTHER TECHNIQUES

Other whole-group techniques that work well in behavior management and provide flexibility for the teacher are as follows:

1. Use a system of •'s and /'s next to each student's name on the chalkboard to award bonus points and issue warnings. The teacher can decide how many bonus points each • is worth, whether or not the /'s will represent fees for disruption of the educational process, and how frequently to award •'s. Other advantages of this system include (a) nonverbal, visual cues that do not require a break in the instructional process and (b) a clearly defined way for students to monitor their own behavior. Bus behavior and homework rewards can also be built into this system.

| *Example* | *Key* |
|---|---|
| Joe • • / • • • • | •'s = +3 /s = -2 |
| Sue • • • • / / • | Homework = • • |
| Tom • • • • • / • | Bus behavior = • • • |
| Mark • • / • • • • | |

   Bonus point totals for each student would be +16 for Joe, +11 for Sue, +16 for Tom, and +16 for Mark. Draw a vertical line through all rows at the end of each period to keep track of points earned. Three /'s in one period would equal a 0 on the point sheet.

   Each afternoon, total the points for the day and then erase all but the names in order to be ready for the next day.

2. Teach students decision-making steps early. Within the first month of school, the class needs to know that the teacher has a plan for dealing with whole-group problems.

   When several students become involved in a fight or loud argument, an effective way to calm the class is to follow these steps:

   a. Reward each student who is sitting quietly with bonus points or a small, edible reward. Let everyone know that sitting quietly will earn a reward.

   b. After 3 to 5 minutes, remove from the room students who will not sit quietly. If this is not possible, continue to reward the others until everyone is calm enough to continue. Another alternative is to have an aide take the students who are behaving appropriately out of the room for a little while. This will give the acting-out students an opportunity to settle down without losing face with their audience.

c. Once everyone is sitting and ready to begin, list the decision-making steps on the chalkboard. Explain to the class that you are interested in hearing each person's point of view about the upsetting incident. Remind them that each person will have a chance to speak; bonus points will only be given for appropriate behavior; and each person is to limit what he or she says to what was felt, seen, and heard personally. No accusations or name calling will be allowed.

d. Give the students time to respond to the following decision-making steps as related to the specific incident:

(1) Identify the problem, goal, and/or feeling.

(2) List alternative actions.

(3) Pick the most appropriate alternative(s).

(4) Act on your decision.

(5) Evaluate.

By the time each student has responded, the group will be calm and ready to make a decision about how to handle any future problems. This technique requires careful monitoring by the teacher, especially in the beginning. While it will not solve problems in a group immediately, the individual students and the class as a whole grow tremendously through consistent use of this process. Knowing that each person's thoughts, feelings, and ideas will be recognized as well as being given the opportunity to problem solve together with the teacher strengthens the students' feelings of self-control, self-respect, and willingness to cooperate.

It is possible for any type of class to learn this process. Students eventually begin the process and carry it out completely with little or no help from the teacher. It will only work, however, if the teacher consistently recognizes and rewards appropriate behavior.

The steps can also be written out on a worksheet. Students can be given the worksheet to fill out instead of participating in a discussion if that is thought to be more productive in some cases.

3. Set group goals that encourage individuals to correct their own behavior. Make it clear that group rewards will be forfeited if inappropriate behavior is used to put pressure on classmates to conform. For example, one group goal could be that everyone will handle his or her problems quickly so that time-out is not needed. Each day that the group is able to stay in class all day, even if minor problems occur, the whole class will receive a reward. Other group goals might include appropriate bus behavior, turning in homework, or using words instead of fists when angry. If it is carefully monitored to guard against negative peer pressure, this technique can build a spirit of cooperation and achievement.

The teacher must set realistic goals for this to work. An extremely aggressive class will only feel more defeated and angry if a goal to stop all fighting is set when fights are frequent and individuals within the group have not learned alternative self-control methods. Build the group up slowly with short-term goals first. For example, if there are no talk-outs during morning announcements, the group will earn _____. To avoid a blow-up by the other group members if one student fails to follow through, award bonus points or a small, edible reward to those who were following directions. Remind them that their appropriate behavior helps classmates who have not yet mastered the self-control required.

4. Produce and display group projects on a regular basis. As the students learn to cooperate with each other, they will need a way to get positive recognition from others. For example, have the students make model Indian and Pilgrim villages with pretzels glued to milk cartons, sticks, paper, cloth, and dug-out canoes from bars of soap, giving everyone an opportunity to contribute. The group can make maps, reports, and even a class book about the project. Invite other classes to view it or put it on display in the office or school library. Making a tape-recorded rap song, radio play, or selection of songs to be played over the school intercom is another way to get positive schoolwide recognition. While these whole-group projects take extra planning, they are well worth the effort.

5. Select literature to read aloud that illustrates a common group problem. Discuss the characters, setting, conflict, and resolution of the story as it unfolds each day. Students gain many insights while building vocabulary and an increased interest in literature. One upper elementary group obsessed with racial prejudice and fighting responded extremely well to a discussion of *The Call of the Wild*. After finishing one chapter, a student exclaimed, "Those dogs act just like us!" The class launched into a discussion that lasted as long as the book took to read. Fights decreased, respect for individuals increased, and, surprisingly, empathy began to develop among the students.

## DEALING WITH SETBACKS

In a classroom for students with behavior disorders, it is important to learn to pat yourself on the back for small steps forward. Learning to accept setbacks is also essential.

In the following anecdote, Jason once more illustrates the need for teacher flexibility in selecting interventions.

> Jason manages himself well for most of the morning. His interactions are stiff and controlled, but appropriate. After lunch, midway through our science lesson, Jason's need to take control overtakes him. He throws a tack and refuses to pick it up.
>
> "Jason, throwing things is not appropriate in the classroom. Please pick up the tack by the count of four. If you decide not to, I will help you. You have to the count of four to make up your mind. One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . ."
>
> Jason walks halfway to the tack. Then he stops and refuses to follow through.
>
> "Jason, let's pick it up together. I will hold your hand and walk with you." Jason's hand is limp. At first he walks slowly with me. Without warning, he begins to kick, scratch, bite, and punch.
>
> "Jason, I cannot allow you to hurt me, yourself, or anyone else. If you cannot stop yourself, I will hold you till you can. You have to the count of three. One . . . two . . . three . . . ."
>
> On three, I half carry, half drag him to the rug. Johnathan is mainstreamed at the time. Kevin is out for personal counseling. Tomika sits quietly at her desk working puzzles. Lydel begins running into walls, yelling, "My protection! Help! Help!" Tommy stares out the window while Marcus encourages Jason to "beat my ass."

Because Ms. Agnew has left early today, I send Tomika to get another teacher to take the others to another room for a while. In the meantime, I wrestle to get Jason into a safe restraint position. Jason is strong and wiry. Before I manage to get him into a secure position, he kicks me, scratches my arm and his own face, pulls out some of his own hair, and urinates on both of us. I continue to talk as calmly as I can to Jason and Lydel.

"Lydel, it's OK. Ms. Thomas is coming. We won't let anyone hurt you."

"Jason, I know you're upset. Take deep breaths. I won't hurt you. I just want you to calm down."

Ms. Thomas finally comes for Lydel, Tomika, Marcus, and Tommy. They will stay with her for a while.

"Jason, can you tell me what you're thinking?" He stops struggling as soon as the others leave. I am hoping to find out what this tantrum is all about.

"No one likes me."

"You think you don't have any friends?"

"No! Everyone hates me. You hate me. You scream at me all the time."

"Jason, I can't remember ever screaming at you. When did I scream at you?"

"I don't know. Maybe you didn't. But you will. Everyone does. And you hate me anyway."

"I've only known you 1 day. So far, I've seen a strong, healthy, nice-looking young man who likes to do well on his schoolwork and who knows more about math than most of his classmates. I don't hate anything about you."

"But I kicked you and called you names."

"Yes, you did."

"My other teachers said, 'He's just too bad. Get him out of here.'"

"I'm not your other teachers. I don't want you or anyone else to get hurt in here. When you're angry, you have extra energy. I think I need to teach you better ways to use that energy. That's why you're in this room with me. I knew you needed help with that. I told Ms. Dodd I wanted you to come to my class."

"No you didn't!"

"Yes I did! You can ask her. I don't hate you, Jason. I don't hate any child for needing extra help learning things. But I won't let you hurt anyone, either. Now, what can you do with that extra energy?"

"Run!"

"OK."

"Beat pillows!"

"OK."

"But we don't have any in here."

"No, we don't today. I will bring you one tomorrow if you promise to beat it instead of yourself or others. OK?"

"OK."

"And I like your idea about running. You may ask Ms. Agnew to take you out for a run when she is here and you feel the need. Other things you might try would be sitting in a chair and wiggling your feet or scribbling on a paper when you feel the extra energy building up. Now please pick up the tack."

"Here it is." Jason's tear-stained face has a real smile on it.

In the weeks that follow, Jason and I have two more similar episodes. After that, he knows me well enough to let the other interventions work for him. In the year and a half I work with him, he never becomes physically aggressive again. He also never needs hospitalization.

## TOUCHING

A note about touching students who are upset is needed here. The age and maturity level of the child must be considered. When Jason refused to pick up the tack he had thrown, an alternative to walking him to the tack by holding his hand would have been charging him points for having someone else pick up the tack. Jason then would not have required contact. He still might have attacked me or a classmate anyway. Verbal and physical aggression were his primary ways of dealing with anger. Holding his hand in a gentle way before his blow-up gave him an opportunity to find out through touch that I had no intention of hurting him. Jason was 8. This would not work as well with a middle school or even upper elementary student. Base choices given to students on their age, physical size, emotional maturity, and ability to understand.

It is also wise to remember that students will be unpredictable in their reactions. Kevin had been with me for 1 1/2 years before he took any physical aggression out on me. Screaming, cursing, fighting with peers, tearing up school materials, and knocking over furniture were problems Kevin and I had dealt with. He was making tremendous progress academically and behaviorally. I had become comfortable and a little too nonchalant with him. One day after recess, a hot, sweaty, and very angry Kevin returned to the room. He told me he was upset and we talked a while. I misjudged how angry he really was. At one point I tapped him on the head with some papers and said, "Oh, come on, Kevin. It's OK."

It wasn't OK with Kevin. He flew out of his seat and punched me with all of his 8-year-old might right in the jaw. I was shocked. Impulsively, I grabbed his wrists and said in a quiet but firm voice, "Kevin, what are you doing?"

It took 6 weeks of wearing a splint to repair the damage to my jaw. But I learned a life-long lesson from my mistake.

Chapter 5 discusses the importance of establishing and maintaining an instructional focus. In spite of behavior problems, a great deal of learning can and does occur.

# 5

# Instructional Focus

Once a behavior management system is established and a skeleton schedule has begun to take shape, instructional planning can begin in earnest. Classes for students with behavior disorders typically span 2 to 3 chronological years. As students get older, however, academic functioning within a group of 7 to 10 children can span 3 to 9 years. Many factors contribute to students' low performance, including truancy, frequent school changes, medication changes, behavior that interferes with consistent progress, little or no support from home, and learning disabilities.

One way teachers have dealt with differing academic levels in the past has been to create a folder of work each day for each student. This method may be necessary for brief periods of time as limits are being set for a group, but having students sit alone at their desks as the teacher walks around helping them one at a time is a poor use of instructional time. Furthermore, it teaches students nothing about how to manage in a more typical classroom setting. With 10 students in a class, this arrangement only allows each student 6 instructional minutes per hour.

How can a teacher do anything else with so many academic levels in one small group? Check the county and state guidelines for each grade level. A hierarchy of skills across several grade levels can act as a guide for instruction. Then assess the oral comprehension level of the group. While a group of third, fourth, and fifth grade students with behavior disorders may function academically at a level anywhere from kindergarten to sixth grade, they will be able to function at the appropriate age level if the information is covered orally. Their ability levels in concept development and vocabulary will often be age appropriate despite lower reading and math achievement scores, unless their emotional problems include severe psychosis, autism, or mental disabilities.

Once the overall concept and vocabulary development of the group has been established, whole-group lessons can be taught orally at the appropriate grade level for their chronological age. Written assignments can be adjusted for individual academic levels.

The following lesson outlines illustrate a formula that works well across grade and age levels.

## MATH

Math concepts through the eighth grade will generally include numeration; place value; fractions; geometry; money; time; and measurement for temperature, volume, area, and linear forms. Begin each lesson with a problem the whole group can help solve.

Word problems require specific skills of organization and evaluation no matter how easy or difficult the final computation may be.

Select a word problem to work together orally that will employ skills each member of the group is using in independent work. Read the problem aloud. Then guide the group through the following activities:

1. Ask, "What information do we need to solve this problem?"
2. Ask, "What operation will we use?" Give each student an opportunity to respond to this question. Put a +, −, ×, or ÷ sign next to each person's name as he or she responds. Allow divergent answers and discussion of reasons each student has for his or her answer.
3. Ask the students for ideas on how to illustrate the problem. Have appropriate pictures or manipulatives available.
4. After illustrations are complete and correct based on the information in the problem, ask once again whether the students are satisfied with their choice of operation. Make changes based on their responses.
5. Ask, "Does this answer make sense? Does the answer match our illustration?"

Use this daily oral problem-solving practice as a springboard for specific skill development. One student may be learning place value through the millions, another through hundreds, and another through tens. They will all benefit from a group discussion process. The more advanced students gain confidence from assisting others. The less advanced students begin to understand how what they are learning builds on other ideas. They begin to feel more capable as they realize that they are using the same manipulatives as more advanced students and can indeed hold their own in the group process. The teacher can create an atmosphere of respect for each student's abilities by structuring the questioning to include each person at his or her level of competence.

A minitest given each day on facts related to each student's skill level is another way to involve the whole group while meeting individual needs. Divide addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts into 20-item minitests. Other information can be divided in a similar fashion. Measurement tables and area and perimeter formulas can be made into minitests. Each student is given a minitest each day. The timer is set for 1 minute. When students score 90% or better on their minitest, they mark their progress on a chart. Mastery of all addition facts or subtraction facts will earn the student a special reward of some kind. It is not necessary to set a time limit for mastery. Students compete against themselves—no one else. Extra practice on items not mastered can be provided as homework and during independent work times.

Materials needed for whole-group problem solving include a resource for daily word problems related to the group's needs, manipulatives, and a chalkboard or overhead projector. Minitests are drawn from multiple copies of facts tests based on individual skill levels, a timer, progress charts for each student, and follow-up activities for reinforcement.

Using this lesson format, a typical 45-minute math period would be conducted as follows:

15 minutes for oral whole-group problem solving.

5 minutes for the minitest and scoring.

25 minutes for independent practice.

For 20 minutes of the 45-minute period, students are interacting and involved in a whole-group process. The remaining 25 minutes can be used for individual skill

development. The teacher or aide can teach two or three students who are working on the same skill while the other adult walks around the room offering encouragement and assistance.

## READING/SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES

Vocabulary development and comprehension skills can be taught orally at the group's overall oral comprehension level. Multiple meanings of words, prefixes, suffixes, sequencing, characterization, and other elements of literature can be presented to the whole group through discussion and listening activities. In the area of science and social studies concept development, enrichment activities such as experiments, construction projects, and field trips can provide ample whole-group instructional time.

Read a selection, show a movie, or show a filmstrip to introduce information to the whole group. Follow this with discussions and questions designed to instruct and reinforce. To test understanding, provide skill worksheets at individual reading levels. Testing can be done with the whole group at once by giving the students oral questions with written answers. Written answers can be words taken from a word bank written on the chalkboard, true or false, happy face or sad face, or a code of some kind—perhaps having the students write the first letter of key words while statements are read or use geometric symbols to represent certain words or concepts. For instance, after studying systems of the body, students might write a *D* for *digestive system*, a *C* for *circulatory system*, or an *N* for *nervous system* as the teacher reads functions and representative organs.

## SPELLING

Phonics games are easily adapted to whole-group activities. Board games can be played with each student having his or her own set of cards. Quiz show type games and traditional spelling bees can also be used to pull the group together despite varying levels of ability. The teacher simply calls out questions and words related to each student's ability level as the game progresses. Independent practice can follow, using the same set of words or phonics skills practiced during the game.

Board games can be developed around themes, holidays, and seasons. These are easy to file. Copies can be given to students for use at home. Floor mats made of poster board or cheap fabric can be used with bean bags. Letters can be printed on the mats. Students generate words that include letters the bean bags land on. Cubes made of milk cartons covered with paper, or wooden blocks can also be used. The cubes might have vowels on one side and consonants on the other. As students roll the cubes, they must think of words that contain the vowels and consonants that come up.

## LANGUAGE

Language activities can be an enjoyable time for the class when activities such as the following are presented.

1. Sing traditional or modern songs from printed sheets. Students can identify parts of speech by circling nouns with blue, verbs with red, and adjectives with yellow.
2. Make a wall chart of all the capitalization and punctuation rules appropriate to the grade levels represented by the class. Each day provide the class with two to four incorrectly written sentences on the chalkboard. The students can use the rules on the

chart to correct the sentences orally as the teacher marks their corrections on the chalkboard. This activity only takes 5 to 10 minutes. It is an excellent way to focus the group's attention while practicing skills on many levels simultaneously.

3. Make "word walls" with seasonal or academic themes. Categorization, parts of speech, sentences, paragraphs, dictionary skills, and vocabulary development lessons can be developed from student-generated word lists.
4. Tape record plays complete with sound effects. Because less movement and direct interaction are needed, taped plays can be an excellent first step in learning group participation without overwhelming the students. The tape can then be played over the school intercom or be placed in a listening center for recreational reinforcement time.
5. Use pantomime to sharpen vocabulary skills. Pantomiming words can generate ideas for synonyms, antonyms, and multiple meanings for words.
6. Use newspaper comic strips cut apart to sharpen sequencing and prediction skills.
7. Use comic strips with words covered up to encourage story writing.
8. Make group-produced books. Use stories, poems, and illustrations from each class member.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

In short, when planning instruction for a multilevel group, gear oral instruction to the overall chronological age level. Keep independent practice work at the academic functioning level of each individual. Continually work toward bringing the two levels together.

In the beginning and at times of increased stress, keep in mind that the success of the group hinges on keeping all aspects of instruction in perspective. If behavior management takes extra time, be flexible. Taking extra time when the class needs it actually saves time in the long run. As important as teaching math, reading, and writing is, it is never more important than helping students deal with their behavior. On the other hand, making real progress academically reinforces positive self-concepts. Students often think that they are stupid and incapable of learning because of their failure to master material others have mastered. They need to make progress academically. They also need to take the time necessary to learn appropriate behavior. Help them keep the two needs balanced. Students won't feel successful unless they can see progress in *both* areas.

Maintaining instructional focus helps de-escalate the most disruptive behaviors. As Marcus and Lydel illustrate, not all problems can be totally avoided.

"Yo mamma!"

"Don't you talk 'bout my mamma! I'm gonna kill you, Sucker!"

"Mrs. R., Lydel is hitting me."

"Lydel. Marcus. Come here. Sit in your chairs. Tell me what is happening." As if I don't know. Fighting is a daily ritual. "Yo mamma" doesn't mean anything to anyone. It's just a phrase repeated at predetermined intervals to signal the ceremonial rite of sparring. Any rational attempt to problem solve is met with shrugs of disbelief. As far as the children are concerned, only a novice would

perceive the bashing in of heads as a problem to be solved diplomatically. And yet, here I sit day after day repeating my words and hearing theirs again.

"Marcus was messing with me."

"No, I wasn't! Lydel was talking 'bout my mamma. No one talks 'bout my mamma!"

"You liar!"

"OK boys. First of all, what is the rule about fighting?"

Lydel speaks first with, "Keep your hands and feet to yourself. Go to the teacher if you need help."

Marcus retorts, "But Lydel was messing with me. My mamma says if anyone messes with me I 'posed to fight."

"Marcus, at home you do what your mother tells you to do. At school, the rules are different. Fighting at school is inappropriate."

"My mamma says fight, so I'm gonna fight!"

"If you decide to fight at school, what will happen?"

"I don't care what you say, Bitch! You aren't my mamma! You aren't nothing to me!"

"I'm asking a question. What will happen if you and Lydel decide to fight?"

Marcus sulks and lifts his middle finger in my direction. Lydel giggles as he shifts his weight back and forth in his chair.

"OK guys. I need an answer. Either we can discuss this and come up with an agreement together or you can each write your own plans. Either way, neither of you will be earning work sign-offs or points until it is done."

"Fuck you!"

"We need to talk appropriately, Marcus. I'll know you are ready when you raise your hand."

Lydel hesitantly raises his hand.

"Yes, Lydel."

"If I fight at school, I will get in trouble."

"Why?"

"Because fighting's not right."

"Why?"

"Because someone might get hurt."

"That's right Lydel. Thank you. I see Marcus has his hand raised. Are you ready to talk with us?"

"Yeah."

"Are there other things people can do when they are mad?"

"Yeah."

"What?"

"Ignore or ask for help."

"Anything else?"

"Don't say or do things to make other people mad."

"OK Lydel, anything else?"

"Just walk away."

"How does your body feel when you get mad? Are your muscles tight or relaxed?"

"Tight!"

"Do you have lots of energy, or are you kind of sleepy?"

"I feel like punching!"

"Marcus, how do you feel when you're mad?"

"I just feel mad like I could knock you out!"

"Well, that energy is hard to deal with sometimes. Ignoring someone who is doing or saying something aggravating doesn't get rid of that energy, does it?"

"No way!"

"What can we do with that energy?"

"Scream!"

"Run!"

"Punch pillows!"

"Jump up and down!"

"Stomp!"

"Scribble!"

"OK, now you're thinking! Once again, the problem is what?"

"Fighting!"

"The feeling is what?"

"Anger!"

"The appropriate choices are . . .?"

"Ignore."

"Ask for help."

"Walk away."

"Don't say or do inappropriate things."

"What can you do with the extra energy?"

"Ask if it is OK to do something appropriate that takes extra energy."

"If you decide to fight, what will you earn?"

"Time in the corner."

"No activity period."

"No points or money for the classroom store."

"No friends."

"If you follow your plan, what will you earn?"

"Points and money for the store."

"Activity time."

"Treats."

"More friends."

"Which would you rather earn?"

In unison the boys say, "The good stuff!"

"So, what are you going to do?"

"Talk nicely."

"Stop fighting."

"I like your plans. You will get a chance to show me your new decisions in action tomorrow. For the rest of today, however, you will do your work in in-class suspension. You can earn work sign-offs and money for correctly completed work, but you will not earn points or recess privileges until tomorrow."

# 6

# Dealing with Changes

The class is moving along very nicely. The teacher, aide, and students have all found a balance. A sense of trust and stability is beginning to form. Then something happens. A student moves away. A new student arrives. A substitute is called. Art is moved from Monday to Wednesday this week. A holiday provides a break in the usual routine. Whatever the change is, the class will respond. It is not the teacher's fault. Changes—even pleasant changes—can overstimulate, threaten, and disrupt these children.

Do not be surprised, hurt, angered, or discouraged by the reactions of these students to changes in their routines. There are ways to get through and reduce the stress they feel. Dealing with changes and stress is a constructive part of their learning experience, so help them prepare and then help them cope. Suggestions for dealing with changes follow:

1. Each morning, review the day's schedule. Whether there are changes or not, discuss events of the day in order. On days when changes may take place, this discussion and preparation time will already be an established part of the routine. Letting students know at 8:00 that PE will be at 10:00 instead of 1:00 gives them time to adjust to the idea.

2. Give the students a plan for dealing with substitutes. Let them know what rewards are available for those who behave appropriately. Let them know that a substitute won't do everything just like they are used to. Point out that the substitute is in charge. Share the substitute day folder with the class. The folder should contain a seating chart, work assignments, point sheet and behavior management instructions, a daily schedule, and any information that is essential about each student, such as medication or behavior patterns.

3. Give the class 2 or 3 days' notice if a classmate is leaving or a new student is arriving. Anxiety over the changes can be handled through discussion and role playing.

4. Keep holiday celebrations simple. After an extended holiday, the class may need a reorientation period much like the beginning of school. Regression is common, but it can be minimized by providing extra structure until the class recovers its sense of balance and trust. The following are the most important things to remember during times of change:

   a. The children will act out their anxiety.

   b. It is not the teacher's fault.

   c. Their anxiety will subside with reassurance and a return to structure.

d. Planning ahead for, as well as problem solving after, a change—with the students' participation—can reduce disruption and helps to teach students to handle stress.

e. Changes are an opportunity for growth despite the chaotic outward appearance.

f. During times of stress:

(1) Decrease academic pressure by providing practice sheets of previously mastered material.

(2) Increase structure by limiting interactions among students and keeping them actively involved with tasks.

(3) Increase the frequency of rewards.

(4) Use primary reinforcers such as food and drink.

A new student always increases the tension in a group. Helping the class and the new student deal with different experiences and plan for the future can often lead to swift and dramatic changes for the better in behavior.

## DEALING WITH PROFANITY

Profanity and name calling are common events during times of change and increased stress. Whether to ignore this behavior or provide consequences for it depends on the reasons for the inappropriate talk.

With very young children who may be using profanity to shock and gain extra attention, ignoring them until they talk appropriately often works best.

For older children, an adult who ignores profanity might be perceived as weak. Their respect and trust might be weakened if they feel that the adult is either unable or unwilling to stand up to them. Older children and adolescents feel that a personal attack requires some kind of action. It will be difficult for them to accept alternative methods of handling problems if the adult in charge is seen as weak.

Care must be taken to keep inappropriate interactions in perspective. A child may use profanity as a smoke screen to avoid consequences for other behavior. Make sure to give consequences for both the inappropriate behavior and language.

The following anecdote demonstrates how to deal with both inappropriate language and actions.

Jason throws a balled-up piece of paper across the room.

"Jason, please pick up the paper."

"Shut up, whore!"

"If you need help with your work, I will help you. But, first you need to pick up your paper and do 5 minutes for inappropriate language."

"Fucker!"

"That's 10 minutes. You have to the count of three to pick up your paper, or I'll help you. One . . . two . . . ."

"Oh, all right, you four-eyed, flat-chested, big-hipped heifer! Don't get your panties in a wad! I'm going!" Jason stomps across the room, snatches the paper, and marches to the cool-off carrel.

He earns a "0" in appropriate interactions and on-task behavior, but he has followed directions and is getting more creative with expressing anger. Once we've conquered "curse" words, we'll concentrate on finding ways for him to express anger that won't get him into trouble. One step at a time.

Even in the midst of a problem, the teacher should look and listen for small signs of growth. When a child is calm, share it with him.

"Jason, your 10 minutes are up. Please come to your seat."

Jason slumps in his chair. "I can't do this junk."

"You've only been here 3 days. I don't expect you to know it all yet. But before we work on the spelling, I want to tell you something I noticed just now."

"What?"

"The first morning you were here, you must have used about 200 curse words. Just now you stopped after using only two."

"Yeah. I did, didn't I? I'm sorry I called you those names. I was mad."

"I know. Thank you for apologizing. But for now, think about the self-control you decided to use. You used only two curse words; you picked up the paper on your own even though you were mad; and you did your 10 minutes in cool-off. Now you have all but two of your points and there is still time to complete this work for a work sign-off and money for the classroom store."

"I'm not always bad."

"No. You're not. You are capable of making decisions that will help you instead of hurt you. You've already proven that many times in the past few days, and that's not bad at all! Now, are you ready to get this spelling done?"

"OK." Jason smiles and sits up straighter in his chair as we begin to work on his spelling together.

"Jason."

"Yeah."

"One more thing before I go to help Tommy . . . ."

"What?"

"The next time your work is hard to understand, just raise your hand. Ms. Agnew and I love to help kids with their work. If you didn't need our help, we'd be out of our jobs, and that would be terrible!"

"OK."

"Thanks!"

Jason is all smiles as I walk toward Tommy's desk. They're being easy on me today. They're having their problems one at a time.

# 7

# Parent/Teacher Relations

Some parents and guardians are so overwhelmed by their own situations that they are unable to assist the teacher with academic and behavioral problems. Other parents feel as confused, angry, and defeated as their children. These parents may lash out at the teacher, blaming the school for the child's problems. They may give in to the child out of despair. Some may be caught up in a cycle of abuse, neglect, and overindulgence as they struggle with their own feelings about a child who is exhausting to handle. And some parents are doing a wonderful job, but need occasional reassurance and guidance.

While the teacher cannot be a psychologist, social worker, police officer, and recreational director while fulfilling the role of educator, he or she can be a valuable resource to parents who are able and willing to benefit from information made available to them.

The following recommendations are based on real experiences with parents.

## FALSE ACCUSATIONS OF TEACHER MISCONDUCT

Parents at times have falsely accused teachers of prejudice, neglect, unprovoked hostility, unfair consequences, and other offenses. Some parents are overprotective and overemotional when it comes to their child. A teacher must take care to be precise with the parent as well as the student about both rewards and punishments. Frequent communication helps. When the student is clearly attempting to set up a triangle of opposition, it is important to get the parent, student, teacher, and at least one other staff member together in a face-to-face conference in which *facts* are presented. Even faced with facts, the parent may continue to deny that the child is being less than truthful. Threats of refusal of services, going to the school board, and even lawsuits may follow. Continue to stick to the facts; keep clear, concise records; keep supervisors notified of threats; and treat the child with caring, consistent discipline. The child is not responsible for the parent's behavior. Try to keep that in mind even though the child is contributing to the problems by exaggerating or telling lies. Remember that all children stretch the truth from time to time. It is the parent, not the child, who decides what to do with the information. Having the child write a sentence or two about what is going on at the end of each period can sometimes help reorient and reduce the wild stories taken home.

At the meeting, the parent will often be embarrassed for believing the child. It may come out that this has happened before. Reassure the parent. Let him or her know that it is right to care about the child's welfare. Compliment the parent's willingness to get involved. Then work out a plan for communicating in the future. It is good for the child

to be present during this discussion, so that he or she knows that the adults are communicating with each other; that there is a plan for avoiding future difficulties; and that nothing is being plotted behind the child's back. This will not completely stop the manipulative behavior of the child, and the parent may need time to come to trust the teacher. However, this procedure will slow the problem down to a manageable speed.

## LACK OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The parent who never shows up for a meeting, can't be reached by phone, and returns few if any written notes has clearly given up. It might be too late, but just in case it isn't, be persistent. Continue to make phone calls. Write notes for the child to take home. Send a weekly or monthly postcard through the mail. Be positive! This parent can't take any more bad news about the child's behavior. Find something good to say. Write, "Joe has a beautiful smile. It really brightens my day." You don't have to add that he only smiled once in a week full of cursing, vandalizing, and fighting. Or, "Mark's handwriting is really improving." Don't include the fact that you haven't finished counting the number of items he has defaced with profane language while practicing his handwriting.

If the parent never shows signs of taking an interest, it is sad for the child. This is even more reason for the teacher to provide a nurturing as well as disciplined classroom. The child can benefit from the care and teaching he or she receives at school. Helping the child learn to function in society as a whole no matter what the rules at home might be is a must.

## BRIDGING THE GAP

Some parents have conquered a great deal in their own lives and have a deep understanding of their child's needs. These parents are doing well. They know how to care for their child in helpful ways. But they are tired and sometimes discouraged. Living with a child who has an emotional or behavioral disorder is exhausting. These parents need encouragement and occasional support in the form of information about behavior management, child care opportunities, and other community support services. It is generally extremely satisfying to work with such parents.

One of the most valuable things teachers can do for these parents is to help them learn to apply behavior management techniques at home. Give the parents a few basic rules to follow, then help them brainstorm ideas based on the rules. The rules I give parents are as follows:

1. Select no more than two behaviors to work on at a time.
2. Select observable, enforceable behaviors to correct. For example, "Put all personal belongings in their correct places when not in use," instead of, "Be neater."
3. Have a hierarchy of rewards and punishments. Use rewards when at all possible.
4. Make sure rewards and punishments relate to the behavior. Having a child scrub the entire driveway for pouring tempera paint down one side of it makes more sense than sending the child to bed early. Likewise, a reward in the form of one new color of paint per week for appropriate use of the paint makes more sense than giving the child a candy bar.
5. Do not demand immediate mastery. If the child has been screaming for 5 hours per day, start out by rewarding the child for reducing this to 4 or less hours of screaming per day.

6. Have a plan to follow. The child will probably increase the inappropriate behavior in the beginning just to see whether the parents are really serious. Stick to the plan for at least 2 to 3 weeks.
7. The plan will work best if all members of the family participate in helping the child learn the new behavior.
8. Base all rewards and punishments on known likes and dislikes of the child.
9. Be as matter of fact about the plan as possible when sharing it with the child.

## BRIBERY VS. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Occasionally parents will object to behavior modification techniques used in the classroom because they see them as a form of bribery. Explaining the difference between behavior management and bribery requires a clear understanding of the steps involved in both. When a child is in the midst of a tantrum and an adult says "Act right, and I will give you a cookie," that is bribery. Children learn that trick early. Every time someone tells them "No," they go into action.

With behavior management, the emphasis is on prevention of inappropriate behavior through the initial rewarding of appropriate choices the student makes. The student is told before a problem arises what rewards and punishments are available to him. He is then told that he may decide which ones he wants to earn. This is no more a form of bribery than signing a contract to receive payment for a job when the job is completed satisfactorily. Relating the behavior management system to the work world makes it easier for parents to understand and accept.

## THE INITIAL PARENT/TEACHER MEETING

The initial meeting between the parent and the teacher can set a productive tone. The teacher should come to the meeting with an outline of the behavior management plan used in the classroom, a sample point sheet, and a written list of materials the child will need to bring to school. Don't be surprised if, a week or two later, the parent requests another conference to review the point sheet and behavior management plan. These can be overwhelming to the parent in the beginning. Make sure to discuss any policies the school has about restraining students. Get written permission for this if it is allowed and may be needed. Also ask about any allergies. Some parents object to their children's eating items cooked in class. If the class cooks regularly, discuss this with the parent.

Let the parent take the lead in how much is covered in the first meeting. Some parents have a lot of useful information to share with the teacher, while others are hesitant. Being prepared, positive, and professional is the best approach to take.

## EXAMPLES OF PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS

1. Phone conferences—two per semester.
2. Daily point sheets. Write brief notes on them as often as necessary. Be positive.
3. Weekly or biweekly "good behavior" notes. These can be preprinted with fill-in-the-blank type messages. Put them in work folders or staple them to the point sheet.

4. Weekly or biweekly work envelopes. Put samples of the student's work in the envelope. Have the parent sign the front of the envelope. The student can return and reuse the envelope.
5. Semester outlines for academic subjects.
6. Special event notices.
7. Face-to-face conferences.
8. Report cards.
9. Annual individualized education programs (IEPs).

It may not be necessary to do all of these things for all of the parents all of the time. These are merely suggestions that may help parents and teachers work more efficiently together.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Keep parents informed.
2. Be as positive as possible as often as possible.
3. Discuss appropriate choices students have made when at all possible, even when problems arise that need to be shared with parents.
4. Keep a community resource file with names, phone numbers, and addresses of agencies that may offer assistance to families in any way.
5. Keep complete and accurate records. Share these records with the parents.
6. Provide parents with the names of books and articles that might help them manage the child more easily at home.
7. If problems arise between the parent and teacher, notify a supervisor immediately. Have another staff member present at all conferences. Keep copies of any letters and notes sent home.

Dealing with the students for 5 to 6 hours per day, taking care of the seemingly endless paperwork, and then finding time to assist parents can get tiring. Chapter 8 discusses issues related to teacher burnout and how to prevent it.

# 8

# Personal Notes

From behind the gimmicks and techniques involved in the survival of a day, week, year, or longer with children with behavioral disorders, a real person emerges. The children learn to trust the professional aspects of a teacher's relationship with them. However, children are never content to stop there, as adults might be. Children watch, wait, listen, pry, probe, and poke until they're satisfied that they know all that they want and need to know. The personality they discover behind the point sheets, reward system, and time-out chair makes all the difference as far as they're concerned.

My enthusiasm for teaching and learning is real. My belief in the children is real. My desire to be honest, fair, firm, and caring is real. In these ways, I believe most teachers are alike. I have a visual image of myself as a velvet-padded brick. The children's willful, misdirected energy can safely find release and new direction as they figuratively and sometimes literally bang their heads against me. I am not unforgivingly angered, disappointed, or hurt. No matter how rough the previous day was, I can meet a new day with positive expectations. My students know that I hate fights and angry confrontations. They also know I won't back down or be intimidated.

Not everyone is a velvet-padded brick. Not everyone needs to be. A teacher's style emerges from a creative blending of learned technique and individual personality. It is important for each teacher to be aware of his or her own personal style. In spite of all we know about behavior management, the real growth occurs through relationships.

As I watch my students go through the ups and downs of learning newer, more appropriate responses to their feelings, I am often amazed at little things adults can easily take for granted. Why does a child who has been interrupting a lesson for 10 solid minutes, ignoring corrections, and cursing a blue streak over the zeros on his point sheet respond quickly, quietly, and without further discussion to "Put your head on your desk—now"?

Then there is the 6-foot tall 15 year old who could break me into kindling if he wanted to. Why does he go to the chair in the corner when I tell him to go after he has just called me a four-eyed, fucking whore?

I'm not complaining, but sometimes the craziest things students do are the most compliant. It's part of a mystery I'm still trying to solve. The following tips are designed to maximize personal effectiveness and minimize stress. Burnout *can* be avoided.

1. Know your style, your strengths, and your limits.
2. Use your style and strengths at every possible point.

3. Respect your limits just as carefully as you respect the limits of your students. Asking for help when you need it is not just OK; it's the only sane, intelligent, and professional thing to do.

4. On rotten days, it's OK to tell the students that you feel angry, disappointed, or tired. Sometimes I am able to get through a tough day by saying, "I really hate it when our day goes like this. I feel like having a screaming fit too." The students will smile devilishly and hope with all their might that I lose it. I then find it helpful to talk myself through the decision-making steps out loud. This helps diffuse my anger while setting an appropriate example for the children.

5. At some point, there will be a child who really annoys you or is repulsive to you in some way. Admit it to yourself. Discuss it confidentially with a co-worker. Be aware of it as you deal with the student. Being honest with yourself is the only way to get beyond it. Not liking every child is not a sign of failure. Making a conscious effort to be positive with the child in spite of your feelings can work. It's OK to have personal feelings. It's important to maintain professional behavior.

6. Have at least two fun activities always available for spur-of-the-moment rewards. Bingo for small prizes, craft activities, and simple cooking activities are common favorites.

7. Plan at least one thing every day that you enjoy doing with the class. I personally hate reading-group activities. Science experiments, singing with the guitar, and building structures related to social studies are my favorite activities. I can motivate myself and my students to get through less enjoyable lessons by planning something more fun for later.

8. Have highly structured, independent work always available for times when things get wild. Word searches, crossword puzzles, and fill-in-the-blank worksheets are possibilities. One thing that works well with older students is to offer them the choice of covering material orally in an appropriate way or having them copy a large amount of information from the chalkboard or a book. The message to them is, "We are going to cover this information today. You may benefit from a discussion of it or, you may copy it. Either way, I will know you have been introduced to the concepts. You decide with your behavior how you will learn it."

9. Take weekends and holidays off. The paper work will be there waiting for you when you get back. Mental health breaks must be respected.

10. Have as much love and support in your life as possible. You can't give if you're not getting.

11. Make a list of all the things that need to be done. Organize them by day, week, grading period, and semester. Give the aide or associate the jobs that don't absolutely have to be done by the teacher. Filing, grading papers, recording grades, averaging grades, filling out forms, running off papers, and caring for bulletin boards are just a few of the time-consuming clerical chores that can be shared with others.

12. Give the aide or associate a list of expected responsibilities and do's and don'ts in the beginning. The Appendix gives some excerpts from my own files. Getting off to a good start by being positive and precise with the aide has many advantages. Be aware of how much training and experience the aide has. Some school systems employ well-educated associates, some do their own training, and others require very little education and training.

13. Set up a filing system immediately. It is easy to get lost in all the paper shuffling. School systems are funded to an extent based on the accuracy of their paperwork. Folder headings can fall under two main categories: Professional and Instructional.

*Professional Folders*

These can be organized in the following way:

P1. Professional Documents:
Certificates
Diplomas
Evaluations

P2. Special Education Memos

P3. Regular Education Memos

P4. Testing Forms and Information

P5. Report Cards

P6. Anecdotal Records

P7. Behavior Charts and Graphs

P8. Motivational Charts and Graphs

P9. Lesson Plans

P10. Substitute Folder

P11. Associate Folder

P12. Classroom Management File

P13. Forms:
Blank IEP Forms
Permission Slips
Etc.

P14. Acronym Lists for County, State, and Federal Programs

P15. Community Resource List for Parents

*Instructional Folders*

Have a folder for each month of the year. Attach a blank calendar to the front of each folder with the name of the month printed on it. Make notes on the calendar for quick reference to special holidays and activity sheets you may find related to each month. Stick copies of all monthly activities in these folders. Art, math, spelling, science, and social studies can be included in these special activity folders. Building a reservoir of "filler" activities can save your life on hectic days. These activities are often useful to have in the substitute folder. The substitute can keep students busy on current activities without disrupting plans you have made. Make sure the substitute folder is updated each month. Christmas worksheets won't go over well in May. Label these special monthly activity folders I1 through I12.

Instructional folders I13 through I23 could be labeled as follows:

I13. Addition Worksheets

I14. Subtraction Worksheets

I15. Multiplication Worksheets

I16. Division Worksheets

I17. Spelling

I18. Language

I19. Primary Reading

I20. Upper Elementary Reading

I21. Secondary Reading

I22. Teacher-Selected Science Topics

I23. Teacher-Selected Social Study Topics

14. Plan bulletin boards with seasons in mind. The background paper takes a long time to replace and is expensive. September through November background paper can be brown, yellow, or orange. December through February background can be red, dark blue, or white. March through June background can be pink, light green, or light blue. During the summer months, primary colors work well. Each month, borders and actual decorations can be changed in a minimum of time. Change background paper a minimum of every 3 months.

15. Make large monthly or seasonal envelopes out of poster board. Print headings on each, and file bulletin board materials in them. Use a large, heavy-duty garbage bag or sew a cloth bag to hold all the envelopes for easy storage.

16. Keep an "Idea Journal." Get a notebook with tabs. Divide the journal into subject headings. Every time a television show, magazine, friend, or co-worker sparks an idea, write it down under the appropriate heading. Multilevel classrooms require creative utilization of time, energy, and material resources. An idea journal can help tremendously.

17. Have some kind of personal and professional support group.

18. Plan something positive for yourself each day. Take at least 30 minutes to do something enjoyable for yourself. Knowing that a reward is waiting after the paperwork is done also helps.

19. Take time regularly to assess progress and set new goals. Part of the job of avoiding burnout is feeling successful. Savor your successes to recharge your batteries. Then set new goals to feel successful again. Falling into a rut can be the worst kind of stress.

The Appendix includes sample worksheets, progress charts, intervention strategies, and other information intended to make life in the classroom easier to organize and manage.

APPENDIX A

# Sample Lesson Plan Forms

Lesson planning can be streamlined to take minimum time for maximum benefit. Within the first month of a school year, a master copy can be developed with blanks left for page numbers, instructional techniques, and evaluation methods. The master copy can include the following:

1. Teacher's name
2. Names of students in each instructional group
3. Times for each activity
4. Textbook titles
5. Subject headings
6. Instructions for daily and weekly events

A page of abbreviations should be stapled to the front of the lesson plan book or weekly forms. Multiple copies of these can be made and filed for future use along with the copies of the master form.

Sample copies of an abbreviation list and a master lesson plan form follow. Lesson planning time can be reduced to 60 to 90 minutes per week using this method. Another time saver is arranging material to be covered in units. Unit and semester outlines provide students, teachers, and parents with a sense of direction in the beginning and a sense of accomplishment at the end.

It is clear that there is a lot of repetitive, time-consuming writing that has to be done when making lesson plans. While developing a master copy takes some thought and time, it makes life a lot easier once it is completed.

If textbook or student grouping changes are needed, erase incorrect information and add the new. Use a highlighting pen on the most important information: It's a big help when things get hectic.

## ABBREVIATIONS LIST FOR LESSON PLANS

| | |
|---|---|
| DOPS | Daily Oral Problem Solving |
| DOW | Daily Oral Writing |
| DVE | Daily Vocabulary Enrichment |
| Exp | Experiment |
| IP | Independent Practice |
| p | Page |
| PD | Participation in Discussion |
| pp | Pages |
| RA | Read Aloud |
| Sp | Spelling |
| SP | Student Product |
| TDL | Teacher-Directed Lesson |
| TM | Teacher's Manual |
| TMM | Teacher-Made Materials |
| TO | Teacher Observation |
| TT | Timed Test |
| w/ | With |
| Wds | Words |
| Wksht | Worksheet |
| w/o | Without |

*For Group Lessons:*

| | |
|---|---|
| DGOPS | Daily whole-group problem solving practice |
| DGOW | Daily whole-group proofreading practice |
| DGVE | Daily whole-group discussion of a selected word |

## SAMPLE LESSON PLAN FORMAT

_____ _____ Week of _____
(Teacher) (School)

_____ _____
(Subject) (Time)

Group I. _____ Book _____
(Names of Students)

Group II. _____
(Names of Students)

**Daily Activities:**
TT on Individual Facts
DGOPS found in book _____ on p. _____

**Monday:** Group I. Objectives _____
TDL/TM p. _____ Assignment /p. _____
Evaluation Method _____
Group II. Objectives _____
TDL/TM p. _____ Assignment /p. _____
Evaluation Method _____

**Tuesday:** Group I. Objectives _____
TDL/TM p. _____ Assignment /p. _____
Evaluation Method _____
Group II. Objectives _____
TDL/TM p. _____ Assignment /p. _____
Evaluation Method _____

**Wednesday:** Group I. Objectives _____
TDL/TM p. _____ Assignment /p. _____
Evaluation Method _____
Group II. Objectives _____
TDL/TM p. _____ Assignment /p. _____
Evaluation Method _____

**Thursday:** Group I. Objectives _____
TDL/TM p. _____ Assignment /p. _____
Evaluation Method _____
Group II. Objectives _____
TDL/TM p. _____ Assignment /p. _____
Evaluation Method _____

**Friday:** Group I. Objectives _____
TDL/TM p. _____ Assignment /p. _____
Evaluation Method _____
Group II. Objectives _____
TDL/TM p. _____ Assignment /p. _____
Evaluation Method _____

**APPENDIX B**

# Sample Worksheets

The following worksheet ideas can help decrease behavior problems by providing alternative methods of practicing similar skills. The same skill to be reinforced is shown in each example to illustrate various ways one skill might be practiced. The skill illustrated in the examples is distinguishing short *a* and short *i* vowel sounds. This is a primary skill; however, the worksheet ideas are adaptable to more sophisticated skills.

## FOR STUDENTS WHO HATE TO WRITE

### Cut and Paste Activities

Provide worksheets with a word or letter bank. The students cut the correct answer from the bank and paste it in the appropriate space on the worksheet. Older students might prefer to cut words or letters from old magazines or newspapers.

1. The _____ can fly.
2. Jan will _____ on the mat.
3. The dog and _____ can run.
4. The hat _____ Dad.

*Word Bank*

| |
|---|
| cat |
| sit |
| bat |
| fits |

1. Put the ham in the p_n.
2. The bat h_t the ball.
3. P_t the cat on the head.

*Letter Bank*

| | |
|---|---|
| a | i |
| a | i |
| a | i |

## Matching Worksheets

The student can draw a line or glue yarn to match items with correct answers.

| | *Word Bank* |
|---|---|
| 1. The _____ is brown. | cat |
| 2. The _____ can fly. | sit |
| 3. The dog and _____ can run. | bat |
| 4. Jan will _____ on the mat. | fits |
| 5. The hat _____ Dad. | mitt |

## Trace Stencils

Students who hate to write often enjoy tracing stencils. An answer sheet will need to be provided with spaces big enough for stenciled responses. Decorating the answers when time permits is a common source of enjoyment.

## Circle Correct Answers/Multiple Choice

For each item, give two to four possible responses under or beside the question. The student circles the correct answers or puts a code letter for the correct answer in the appropriate space.

*Circle one correct answer for each sentence.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The _____ is brown. | sit | mitt |
| 2. The _____ can fly. | cat | bat |
| 3. The dog and _____ can run. | fits | cat |
| 4. Jan will _____ on the mat. | sit | mitt |

## FOR STUDENTS WHO HATE MATH

Students who hate math usually have a great deal of difficulty with new concepts. Move slowly. Provide plenty of practice with hands-on materials. Divide worksheets into two or more parts. The student can be given small rewards for each part completed. Math puzzles that require coloring or assembly are also motivating. The progress charts in the next section may help these students.

At the beginning of the year, provide everyone with a math folder. These can be quick references for the students to use unless they are told not to. The folders can include facts charts, a laminated number line, a place value chart, measurement equivalents, math terms and their definitions, and step-by-step procedures to follow for word problems and other multistep computations they will need to know.

Concept development is often hindered by poor vocabulary. A sixth grader with an average IQ who still gets lost during a lesson unless the teacher says "take away" to mean "subtract" may need to spend some time learning math terms. Informally assess the students' vocabulary understanding as well as their computational skills.

WORK SIGN-OFF SHEET

# Work Sign-Offs

**Student's Name**

| Month | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **Homework** | | | | | |
| **Earn An Activity Period** | | | | | |

Place time periods or subjects in these spaces.

**APPENDIX C**

# Sample Progress Charts

The following progress charts provide various ways for students to keep track of their achievements. Students need an honest boost once in a while. Having a record of their efforts and successes is a positive way to keep them moving in the right direction.

## SKILLS CHECKLIST

Name _____

School Year _____

Age _____

## READING

### Sight Word Recognition

A ✓ indicates 85% or higher accuracy on an oral test of Harris Jacobson sight words given in isolation.

| Set | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Second | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Third | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fourth | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fifth | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

### Phonics

### Initial Consonant Sounds

B C D F G H J K L M N P Q R S T V W X Y Z

### Final Consonant Sounds

B C D F G H J K L M N P Q R S T V W X Y Z

**Short Vowels** A E I O U

**Long Vowels** A E I O U

### Blends and Diagraphs

th sh wh
bl cl fl gl pl sl
br cr dr fr gr pr sr tr
st str spr

## Comprehension

Type of test used _____
A ✓ indicates 85% or higher accuracy

| Question Type | P | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Detail | | | | | | | |
| Inference | | | | | | | |
| Drawing Conclusions | | | | | | | |

## MATH

### Numeration

Oral counting from 0 to:
___ 10 ___ 20 ___ 30 ___ 40 ___ 50 ___ 60 ___ 70 ___ 80 ___ 90 ___ 100

Recognition of written numerals from 0 to:
___ 10 ___ 20 ___ 30 ___ 40 ___ 50 ___ 60 ___ 70 ___ 80 ___ 90 ___ 100
___ 150 ___ 500 ___ 1,000 ___ 2,000 ___ 10,000 ___ 100,000

### Math Facts

A ✓ indicates 85% accuracy or higher

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Addition | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Subtraction | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Multiplication | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Division | | | | | | | | | | | |

### Other Skills

Word Problems 1 2 3 4 5

_____ Oral counting by 2's
_____ Oral counting by 5's
_____ Oral counting by 10's
_____ Regrouping—Addition
_____ Regrouping—Subtraction
_____ Two-digit multiplication
_____ Two-digit division
_____ Makes change to $1.00
_____ Makes change to $5.00
_____ Linear Measurement
_____ Liquid measurement
_____ Shapes

**LANGUAGE**

_____ Capitalizes people's names

_____ Capitalizes initial words in sentences

_____ Capitalizes months and days

_____ Capitalizes places

_____ Capitalizes personal pronoun "I"

_____ Uses period

_____ Uses question mark

_____ Uses exclamation mark

_____ Uses antonyms

_____ Uses synonyms

_____ Uses homonyms

_____ Alphabetizes to the first letter

_____ Alphabetizes to the second letter

_____ Alphabetizes to the third letter

_____ Uses commas in dates

_____ Uses commas between things in a series

_____ Uses commas between cities and states

_____ Uses commas to set off expletives and antecedents

_____ Composes a complete sentence

_____ Writes three or more sentences in paragraph form

_____ Writes two or more paragraphs in story or report form

## SCIENCE UNITS

| | Vocabulary | Concepts | Application |
|---|---|---|---|
| Human Body | | | |
| Animals | | | |
| Nutrition | | | |
| Plants | | | |
| Machines | | | |
| Magnets and Electricity | | | |
| Matter | | | |
| Space | | | |
| Weather | | | |

## SOCIAL STUDIES

| | Vocabulary | Concepts | Application |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maps | | | |
| Settlers | | | |
| Indians | | | |
| Holidays | | | |
| Japan | | | |
| France | | | |
| Business | | | |
| Community Helpers | | | |
| Your State | | | |

## GRAPH OF TEST SCORES

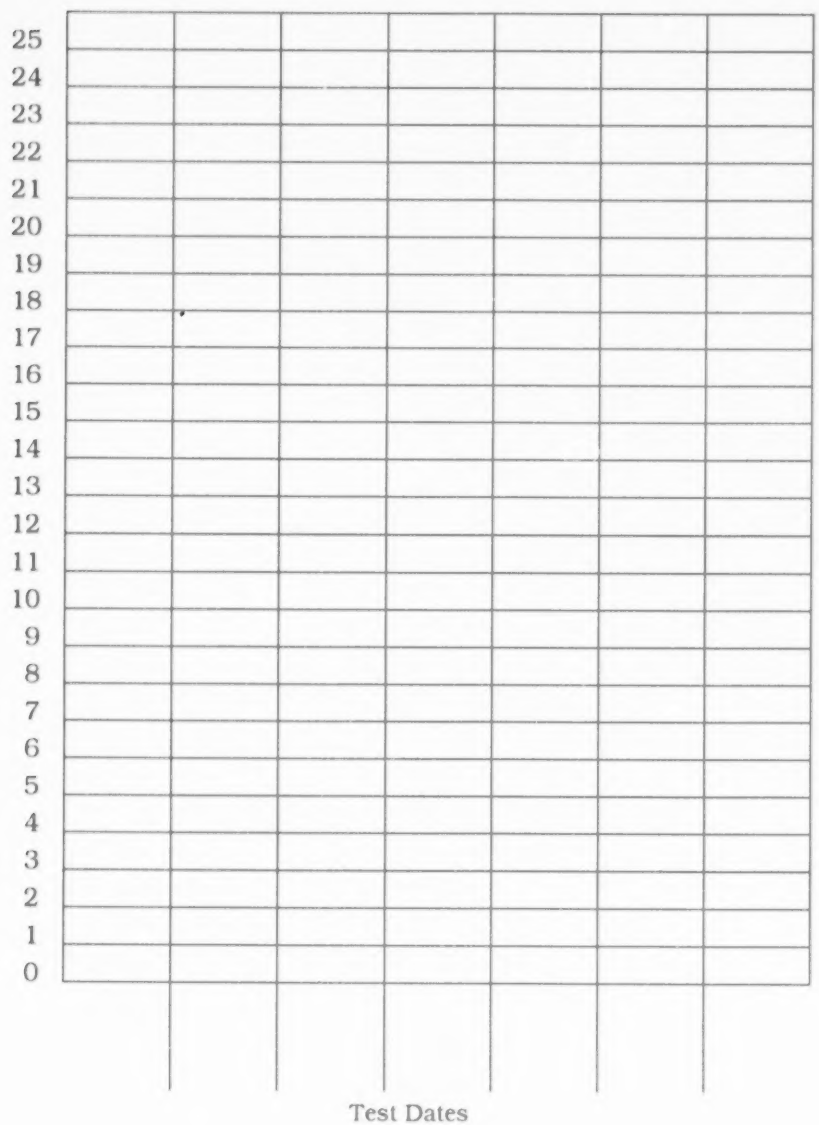
Name _____

Starting Date _____

Mastery Date _____

Set _____

Math facts or vocabulary could be placed on the "Items to Be Mastered" lines. Periodic test scores could be recorded on the graph.




Items to Be Mastered

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name _____

Date _____

Place the goal on the top of the ladder. Place the steps to reaching the goal on the steps of the ladder. The student can color or place stickers on the steps as the goal is reached.

Name _____

Date _____

APPENDIX D

# Sample Notes to Aides

The following hand-outs are samples from my experience with aides in different school systems. Because each system has different criteria for hiring aides, their knowledge and skills can vary tremendously. These pages are meant to help the teacher begin thinking about the aide's role in the classroom. Providing the aide with a written list of classroom procedures before the children arrive can assist in building a productive team approach.

## STUDENTS WITH BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AND DISCIPLINE

Children with behavior disorders display a variety of characteristics. Typical behavior can include excessive use of profanity, spitting, kicking, biting, scratching, hitting, teasing other children, refusing to follow directions, disrespectful behavior toward adults, destroying materials, stealing, and making annoying noises in many different ways.

The reasons for the behavior also vary. Some children have suffered abuse, neglect, or prenatal damage due to the mother's use of drugs during pregnancy. Others have neurological or chemical imbalances that contribute to their behavior problems. For some, the source of their difficulties is not clear. They *are* capable of learning. Our job is twofold:

1. To help them increase their ability to use self-control in maintaining appropriate school behavior.
2. To increase their academic skills to appropriate levels for their ages.

Please familiarize yourself with the Classroom Behavior Management Plan. Behavior modification techniques are based on learning theories and are designed to help the child achieve a positive sense of self-control. Results are often gradual. This is not a quick-fix method of control. The children are faced with choices and learn through positive reinforcement and punishments that they can control themselves.

The following do's and dont's will make the day easier for you and the children.

### *Do*

1. Compliment the children whenever possible for appropriate behavior and academic achievement.

2. Talk in a calm, even tone even if the child is upset or angry.
3. Notice small changes in behavior that might signal a possible problem. Talk to the child, make seating arrangements, or redirect an activity to help diffuse the situation.
4. Follow through on any directions or promises given to the children.
5. Remember that even when a child is acting disrespectfully toward you, it is not personal. The child is reacting to any number of past experiences. Staying calm and firmly in control of yourself will help the child.
6. Describe in clear, positive terms behavior you like, behavior you dislike, and behavior you expect.
7. Ignore, whenever possible, inappropriate behavior that is not dangerous.
8. Voice any concerns or disagreements with the discipline policy the teacher has established before the children arrive or after they have left. The children need to know that the adults in charge are mutually supportive. Failure to present a united front will encourage the children to try to weaken the rules by manipulating the adults into disagreements.
9. Ask for and take breaks when you need them.

***Don't***

1. Call the children names.
2. Overreact to their behavior by raising your voice unnecessarily.
3. Hit or spank the children.
4. Make threats.
5. Argue with the children.
6. Question the teacher's authority in front of the children.

## MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

1. Bulletin boards are changed at the beginning of each month. Please assist the teacher with this duty. Materials are filed in large envelopes according to the month. File materials carefully and keep envelopes in order.
2. Homework folders will be made each _____ week. We will construct the folders with the children. Please check the folders each morning as the children arrive. Record their performance on the chart provided. Assist the teacher in refilling the folders before the children go home each Monday through Thursday.
3. Work envelopes will be sent home every other Monday. Please count the papers in each student's work box, stuff the envelopes, record the number of papers in each envelope on the front, and place the work envelopes with the homework folders.
4. Materials to be run off will be kept in a special box. Please put ditto books in correct order and place masters in the folders provided before returning all materials to the box.
5. Please assist the teacher and students in keeping all instructional kits, learning games, art materials, cooking supplies, and toys organized and in proper condition.
6. Assist the teacher with grading papers and recording grades.

7. Assist the teacher with filling out forms.
8. Our first priority is the students. Please don't worry about items 1 through 7 in this list at times when the students need your assistance.

## INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANCE

1. While the teacher is teaching small groups, please be available to assist individual students with independent assignments. Assistance can include the following:
   a. Reading and explaining instructions.
   b. Helping a student sound out a word.
   c. Giving a student additional clues through leading questions.
   d. Providing the student with self-help materials such as counters, a dictionary, or picture clues.
   e. Offering encouragement and faith in the student's ability to complete the assignment.

   Please do not repeatedly give students answers, do parts of their work for them, or sit for long periods of time with one student. Independent work periods are intended to help students learn to use their time well and strengthen their problem-solving skills. Students need to strike a balance between receiving needed assistance and coming to depend too heavily on adult intervention.
2. If students complete independent work early, engage them in one of the following educational activities:
   a. Flashcard drill with sight words or math facts.
   b. Board games using reading or math skills.
   c. Listening to a student read a library book.
   d. Playing "Hang-man" using reading or spelling vocabulary.
   e. Oral drill of spelling words.
3. During whole-group lessons, feel free to take a break, run off materials, or work on bulletin board materials.

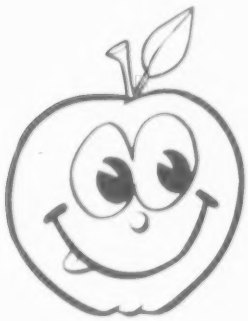
**APPENDIX E**

# Sample Notes to Parents

Keeping parents informed is an important part of the job. With all the other paperwork a teacher has to do, time-saving techniques are a must.

For weekly or monthly good behavior notes, it is helpful to purchase ditto books that contain preprinted and illustrated fill-in-the-blank type notes. A few ideas follow. Homework folders and work envelopes can be run through a copying machine. Spaces for teacher and parent comments as well as the parent's signature can be printed directly on manila folders and large brown envelopes.

An introductory letter at the beginning of the year and a second semester information letter are teacher-made items that many parents appreciate.



Date _____

Dear _____

This is just to let you know how proud we are of _____ for _____.

Thanks!

_____

## SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS

Date _____

Dear Parents,

Enclosed in this envelope are the following items:

A. Supply List

B. Word Cards

C. Math Cards

D. Game Board

E. _____

F. _____

The word cards, math cards, and game boards are for you and your child to use at home. Periodically, your child will bring home new sets of word and math facts cards as well as science and social studies information you can review. New game boards will also be sent home each month. Please do not return game boards and cards.

On Mondays through Thursdays, your child will bring home a homework folder. Each evening there will be a math and a spelling assignment. Please check to make sure that your child does the homework and returns the folder each day. No homework will be assigned on holidays and Fridays.

I am looking forward to a productive year with your child. We will be involved in many interesting and challenging activities. Please call any time you have a question. The school's phone number is _____. We are both interested in providing the best experience possible for your child. I welcome and appreciate your concern and cooperation.

Sincerely,

## SUPPLY LIST

Notebook Paper

Scissors

Pencils

Glue Stick

Erasers

Tissues

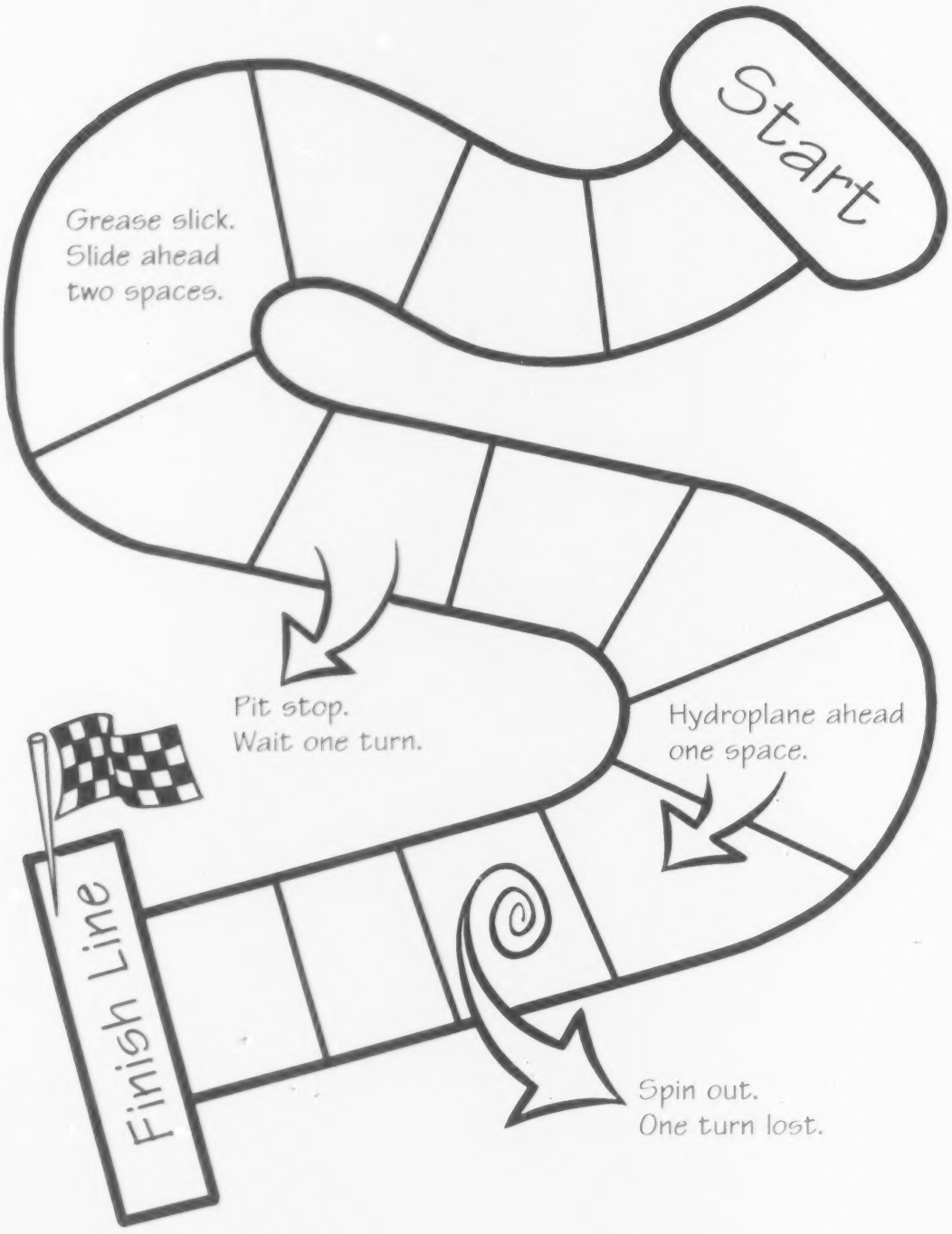
Colored Pencils or Markers

Ruler

## WORD CARDS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

**GAME BOARD**


Start
Grease slick.
Slide ahead
two spaces.
Pit stop.
Wait one turn.
Hydroplane ahead
one space.
Finish Line
Spin out.
One turn lost.

## WORK ENVELOPE

Dear Parents,

This envelope will be sent home every 2 weeks. Please look at _____'s work. Feel free to call me at _____ if you have questions or concerns. Your student needs to return the envelope with your signature on it each time.

Thanks,

_____

| Date | Number of Papers | Parent's Signature | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
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## INFORMATION LETTER

### PROJECTED YEARLY GOALS

**Sylvia Rockwell**

### READING

Each child will proceed at his or her own pace in reading. Instruction will include four areas of emphasis.

A. Harris Jacobson sight word drills will be done daily using flashcards and a variety of teacher-made games and worksheets.

B. Phonics instruction will include initial and final consonants, long and short vowels, and blends and diagraphs.

C. Comprehension skills instruction will include the use of pictures, discussions, worksheets, and basal materials to emphasize the recall of detail, the ability to make inferences, and the skill of drawing conclusions.

D. To foster an appreciation of reading, weekly trips to the library, daily storytime periods, and an opportunity to earn free reading periods will be provided by the teacher.

### MATH

Each child will proceed at his or her own pace in math instruction through the basal materials provided by the schools. Instruction will center on the following activities:

A. Daily drill in numeration skills as well as math facts using flashcards, oral patterning, and games.

B. Written work in workbooks, on worksheets, or with the math kit.

C. Hands-on problem-solving experiences using, for example, art, building activities, or cooking.

### LANGUAGE

Language instruction for each child will depend on his or her reading level. Instruction in language will revolve around two broad areas:

A. Oral language development.

This will include oral activities to stimulate the use of description, complete sentences, and sequencing when speaking as well as learning about antonyms, synonyms, and homonyms.

B. Written language.

This will include punctuation; capitalization; grammar; parts of speech; and correct forms for writing sentences, paragraphs, and stories.

## SPELLING

Spelling words for each child will be selected from reading and phonics patterns the child is learning in an effort to reinforce all three areas of instruction.

## SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES

The following units are projected for the year:

| Science | Social Studies | Month |
|---|---|---|
| Human Body | Maps | August/September |
| Animals | Settlers | October |
| Nutrition | Indians | November |
| Plants | Holidays | December |
| Machines | Japan | January |
| Magnets and Electricity | France | February |
| Matter | Business | March |
| Space | Community Helpers | April |
| Weather | Your State | May |

APPENDIX F

# Sample Decision-Making Sheet

Students who are unwilling or unable for some reason to discuss a problem can fill out a Decision-Making Sheet. Simple sheets would include short, low-level vocabulary questions followed by one- or two-word multiple choice answers or pictures that can be circled. Older, more capable students can answer a more demanding questionnaire. A sample follows.

Take the time to read and discuss this sheet with the student after it is complete. Make it clear that one mistake doesn't have to ruin the day or the week.

## DECISION-MAKING SHEET

Name _____

Date _____

1. What was happening before the problem occurred? _____

2. What was your behavior when the problem began? _____

3. How did you feel? _____

4. What other things could you have done? Name at least 4 that would have been more appropriate. _____

5. Which one of the 3 behaviors you listed in question 4 would you like best?

   Why would you prefer to do that? _____

   What would you have earned if you had chosen that behavior instead of the one you described in question 2? _____

6. What has the problem behavior earned for you? _____

7. How are you feeling now? _____

8. Did you make any good decisions in spite of the problem? What were they?

9. What can you do now to help yourself have a good day? _____

APPENDIX G

# Sample Instructional Games

Because of the children's low tolerance for frustration, material needs to be presented and practiced in a variety of ways. Children will balk at doing the same worksheet over and over, no matter how much they need the practice. Games used along with direct instruction and practice worksheets will speed the academic process and reduce stress for the student.

## QUIZ SHOW TYPE GAMES

Write each student's initials on the chalkboard. Ask questions based on science, social studies, math, or any other academic subject. Stick to questions that can be answered with one or two words. Keep the questions moving quickly. Two points can be awarded for a correct answer. One point can be awarded if the student tries but is incorrect. Erase a point for talk-outs. Earned points may be added to the bonus point balance, or they may be cashed in immediately following the game for small prizes.

Another way to do this is to ask questions that have only a few possible answers. Identifying exclamatory, declarative, and interrogative sentences can be done by giving each student three cards with a period, question mark, and exclamation point on them. As the teacher reads or recites sentences, the students hold up a card with the correct punctuation on it. For science, cards with animal group names can be given to each student. As characteristics and representative animals are read, the students hold up the card with the correct animal group name on it.

## BOARD GAMES

Board games can be made out of manila folders. Holiday themes, seasonal themes, and current super heroes can easily be incorporated into the game board illustrations by cutting pictures from magazines, newspapers, or gift wrap.

Students can use their own words or math facts cards, or the games can be made with questions from science, social studies, or some other academic subject area. These games can also be copied and sent home with the students. A simple spinner can be made from cardboard and a brad, or dice can be used.

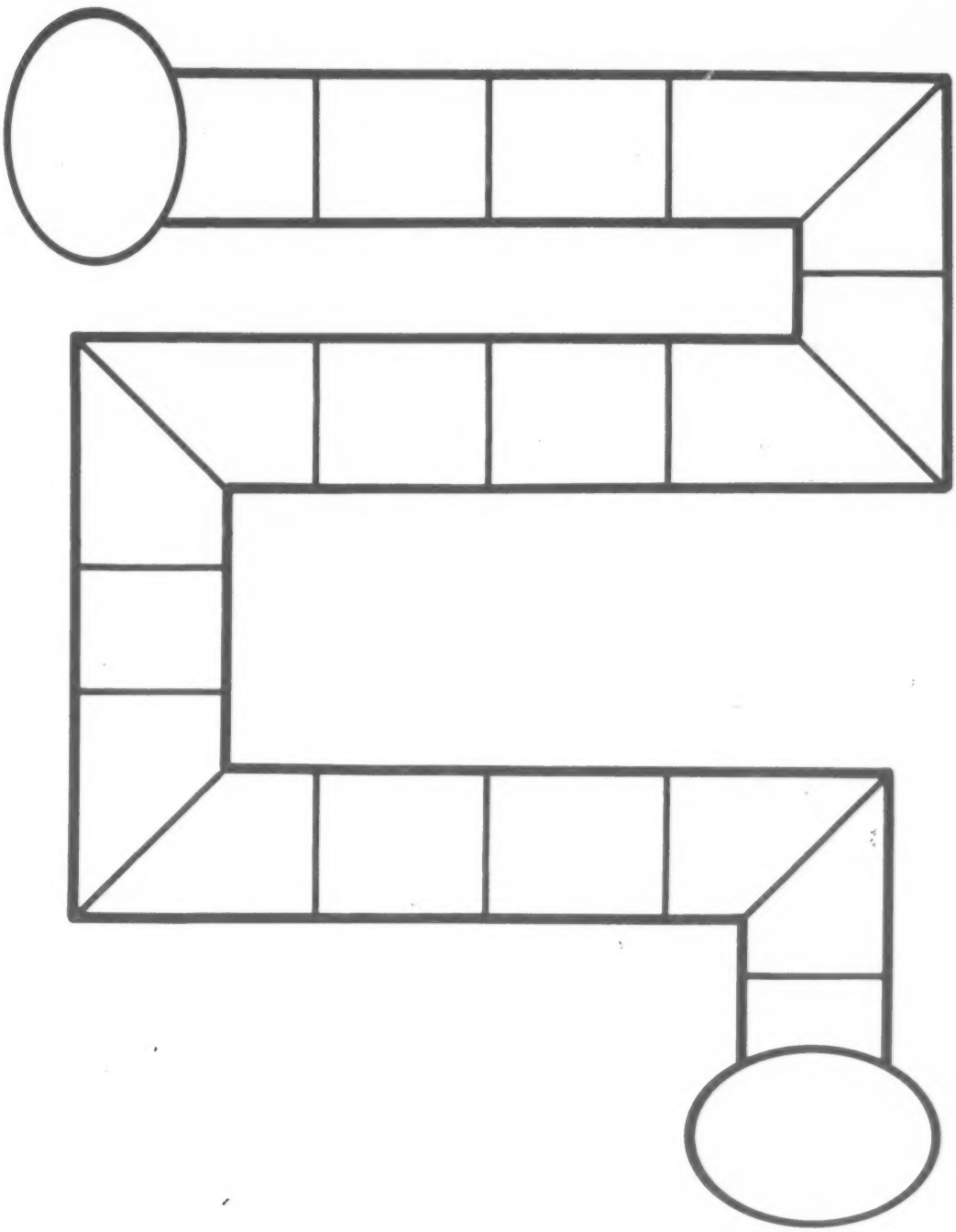
Board games are a wonderful way to fill those few minutes two or three students may have between assignments or other scheduled activities. They will need adult supervision to maintain appropriate behavior while playing.

A few examples of game boards are shown on the next few pages.

## ACTION GAMES

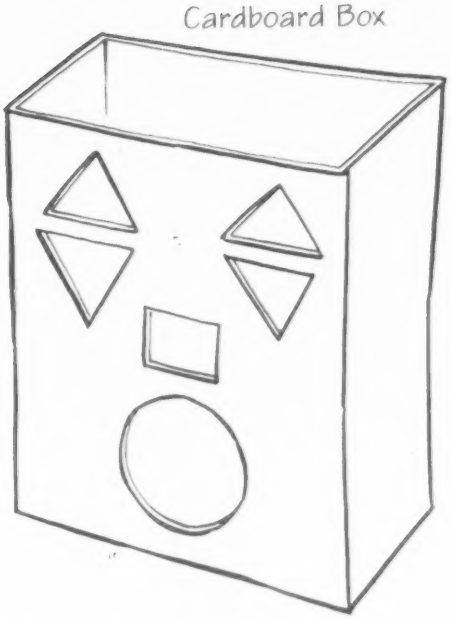
These games allow the children to move around a little while practicing skills. Bean bag games, floor mats made of large pieces of cardboard or old sheets, cubes with numbers or letters on them, and "eraser tag" games can all be adapted to practice a variety of information.

## GAME BOARDS



## BEAN BAG GAMES

Cardboard Box



Seasonal Design

Mats made of poster board or old sheets.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| C | F | N | T |
| D | R | S | J |
| B | Qu | M | K |
| G | V | H | W |

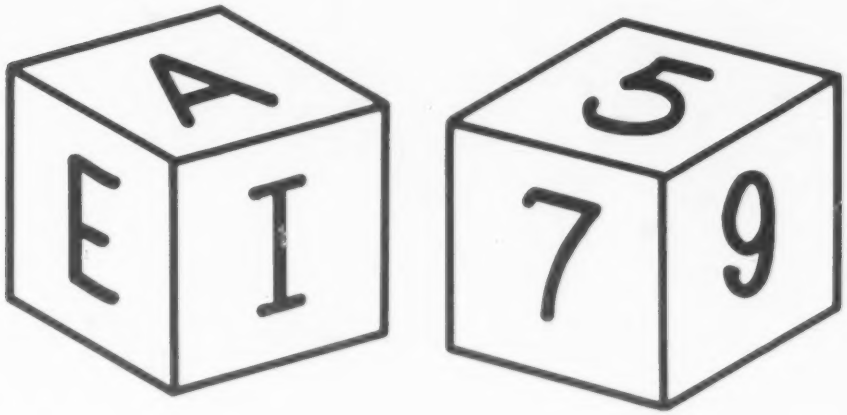
Throw a bean bag. Name words that start or end with the sound represented.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 4 | 1 |
| 8 | 0 | 6 |
| 5 | 7 | 3 |

Throw two bean bags. Add, subtract, or multiply.

## CUBE GAMES

To make the cubes, cut the triangular tops off milk cartons. Cut the milk cartons to a height equal to the width of the cartons. Force one carton into the other. Cover the cube with paper. Then print letters, consonant blends, punctuation marks, or numbers on the cubes. Have the students roll the cubes. Cubes with numbers on them can be added, subtracted, or multiplied. Cubes with letters will require the student to think of a word containing those letters or sounds. Cubes with punctuation marks will require the student to think of a sentence that would need that symbol.



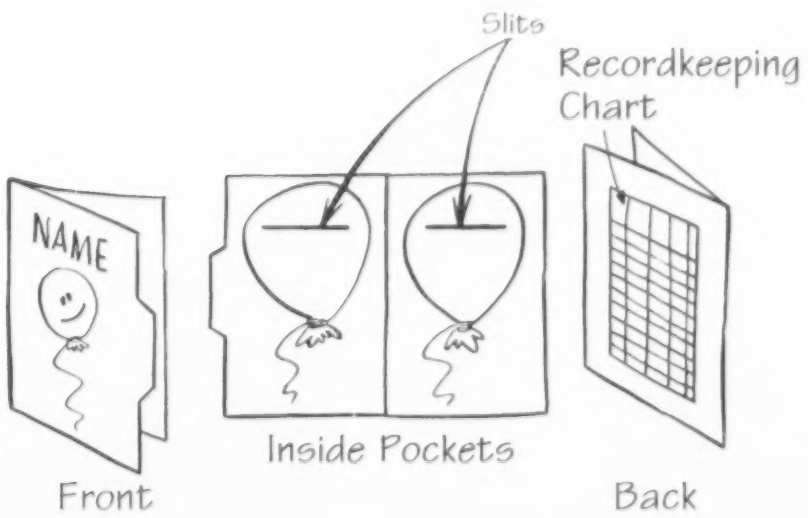
APPENDIX H

# Sample Organizational Projects for Students

Help students stay organized by making items in class that will encourage self management. Homework folders, bank or pencil box decorations, school and classroom maps, student work boxes, and personal bulletin boards for classwork and art work are some of the ideas students respond to positively.

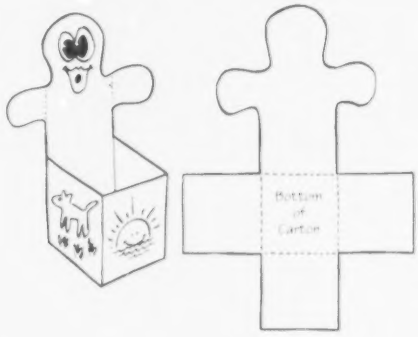
## HOMEWORK FOLDERS

Homework folders can be made from manila folders. Two inside pockets for homework and important notes can be made by having the students color a seasonal symbol or personal design. Glue the outer edges of the pictures to the inside of the folder. Put one picture on each side. Cover the whole inside with clear adhesive plastic. Carefully cut slits in the tops of the pictures without cutting through the folder itself. This forms the pockets. Put a chart on the back to record homework completion for the current grading period. The student can decorate the front.



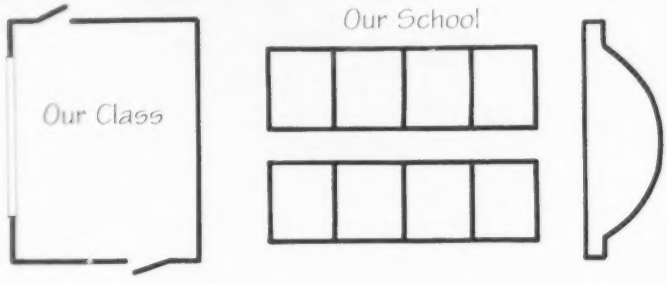
## BANK OR PENCIL BOX DECORATIONS

If the Classroom Behavior Management Plan includes tokens of some kind, the students will need something to keep them in. Very young children who may be too distracted by a box on the desk may do better with a bag or envelope that hangs from the back of the chair or the side of the desk. Older children often like to have a small box on the desk. These boxes can also be used for pencils. An inexpensive way to make them is to cut the triangular tops off milk cartons, cover the sides with paper, and let the students decorate the boxes with holiday symbols, their names, or any other appropriate symbol. Preprinted patterns can also be purchased. This can become a monthly project.




## CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL MAPS

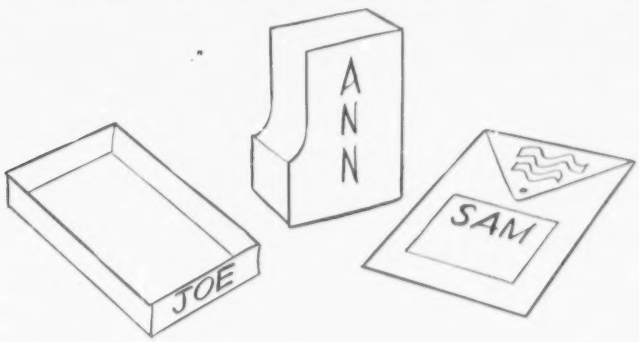
At the beginning of the year, the class will need to be oriented to the class and school setting. This can be done during social studies by incorporating map skills into the lessons. Students can develop a classroom map first, complete with directional symbols and a key. A school map can then be developed. It is best to provide students with a basic floor plan to start. An outline of the room with windows and doors already printed can help them get started. Likewise, when beginning the map of the school, provide a preprinted outline of the whole school. Students can then take a walk to find out the names of the teachers and offices on the outline. These maps can be used to help new students later in the year.



## WORK BOXES AND WORK ENVELOPES

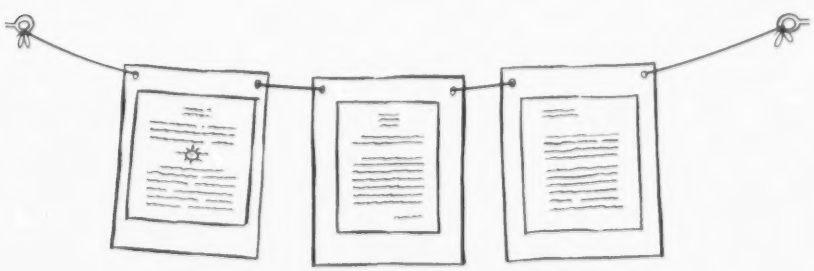
Students will need a place to keep completed and graded papers. A file folder will work, but a box is especially useful because each student can then have two or three file folders along with the work envelope. This keeps materials together and provides the student with a place to keep things that others will not be permitted to touch. The file folders in the students' work boxes can include completed and graded work, incomplete work, and make-up work.

Cardboard flats cut from soda cases obtained from the grocery are a good size. Large cereal or powdered detergent boxes also work nicely. Cover these with colored adhesive plastic. Put a student's name on each one, and place the folders and work envelopes inside. Students may prefer to paint the boxes or decorate them with stickers.




## PERSONAL BULLETIN BOARDS

In some rooms, bulletin board space is limited. To allow each student a place to display work, make mini-bulletin boards out of heavy cardboard. Large, heavy cardboard boxes can be cut to any size desired. Cover the cardboard with spray paint, colored adhesive plastic, gift wrap, or construction paper. Let the students make borders for their own boards. Because tacks and push pins sometimes become weapons, large clips or painted clothespins might be better for securing work to be displayed. Place two holes in the top right and left corners. Thread yarn through the holes. Hang the mini-bulletin boards from windows, ceiling tile frames, or hooks placed in the wall.



APPENDIX I

# Sample Interventions

## DESK POCKET FOR RESPONSE STRIPS

Access the student's baseline performance in some area. Cut the appropriate number of strips of construction paper to match the baseline. Put the strips in the pocket taped to the desk. Each time the student talks out, makes inappropriate noises, or gets up without permission, pull a strip from the pocket. Reward the student at the end of a predetermined time period for every remaining strip of paper. As the student gains greater control, fewer strips are put in the pocket at the beginning of the predetermined time periods. Make sure the pocket is taped in such a way that the opening faces away from the student. Keep all strips pulled out of the student's reach. A student who rips the pocket or strips must pay points to have them repaired, and the time starts over.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Some people object to having students write as a consequence for inappropriate behavior. The concern is that students will have negative feelings about all writing activities if some writing activities are associated with punishment. That has not been my experience. Students, like their teachers, make a distinction between boring paperwork and creative, rewarding experiences.

Writing assignments can sometimes help students focus on specific behaviors in ways that other activities do not. When students write as a consequence for inappropriate behavior, care must be taken to make the assignment appropriate for the age and ability level of the student. Problem-solving or decision-making sheets are one example. Having a student copy particular rules and the reasons for these rules is another example.

With extreme problems that do not respond to other methods, such as nonstop sex talk, a longer writing assignment focusing not only on the school consequences for such behavior, but also on the greater life problems that the behavior can create has worked well with older, middle school students. The longer examples are not recommended for elementary-aged students or students who, due to severe psychosis, may not be aware of everything they do.

On more than one occasion, these writing assignments have dramatically reduced the behavior described in them. Students have told me after copying them that they never realized until they wrote the assignments how much trouble their behavior could cause

them. Only one student has had to copy an assignment more than once. That student only needed two experiences with one of the assignments to reduce the inappropriate responses from as many as 13 per 15-minute period to 2 to 3 per day. Eventually, using other methods, the student completely stopped making the inappropriate responses in the classroom. Some examples of these writing assignments follow.

### Sample Writing Assignment A: Sex Talk

"When I make sexually inappropriate remarks and gestures with my body, I make myself look bad. Others may feel shocked, sick, or bored. No matter how they feel, they can see that my attitude about an adult subject is very immature.

"As I become interested in dating, I realize that my comments will cause girls to stay away from me. Other guys will not want to be around me or double date with me, because my comments and actions will embarrass them in front of their girlfriends.

"As I move into the workplace, my comments will hurt my chances of getting and keeping a good job. Bosses will not appreciate rude comments—especially in front of customers.

"It is definitely in my best interest to keep sexually inappropriate comments and gestures to myself. If I do, I will increase my ability to impress others with my maturity, make friends more easily, and find better employment."

### Sample Writing Assignment B: Responding Appropriately

"When I make inappropriate comments and respond to the inappropriate behavior of others, several things happen. I interrupt classmates and teachers who have work to do. I encourage friends to do and say things that will get them in trouble. I allow myself to continue a habit that is destructive to me. I may get a brief feeling of pleasure out of the attention I get, but in the end, I feel very uncomfortable. The people who laugh at me end up with consequences also. This interferes with my ability to make real friends. This behavior interferes with classroom procedures. And worst of all, this behavior interferes with my own growth.

"I am an intelligent person. I have good ideas and am capable of finding conversation topics that interest me and others without being disruptive and inappropriate. I am also a caring person. I care about my classmates and how my example affects them. I also care about my own growth and maturity.

"In order for me to continue the progress I am making, I need to talk less and think more for a while. I need to evaluate myself before I speak or laugh. Are my words helpful? Could someone misunderstand me because of my actions? Do I want the privileges I can earn by showing others more responsible behavior? Will I feel better about myself after I speak? Is it appropriate to laugh or talk now? Will this help my friends?

"After I take time to evaluate my actions, I am sure I can make good choices. Others will know I have grown. I will be recognized as a leader. I can look forward to a better education, more friends, more self-confidence, a better job, and a greater feeling of accomplishment.

"Learning new skills and habits is never easy. This will require a great deal of effort and concentration. But, I have accomplished other difficult things. With time, hard work, and perseverance, I can accomplish the goals of talking appropriately and

ignoring the inappropriate behavior of peers. I want to do this partly to avoid the consequences I get when I don't. I want to do this partly to earn the rewards, friends, and inner feelings of pride and self-confidence that greater self-control and maturity provide."

### Sample Writing Assignment C: Expressing Anger

This type of writing assignment should be used with upper-elementary-aged students.

"I have a responsibility to myself and others to express anger in ways that do not hurt people or destroy property. I can use words instead of actions. I can ask for help before things get too hard to handle. I can avoid some problems by ignoring what others are doing. I am good at making decisions that help me."

### Sample Writing Assignment D: Teacher-Selected Topic

Have the students write sentences or paragraphs of their own. Have them include the problem behavior and other more appropriate choices. Have them end the assignment with at least one positive statement about their ability to handle things in the future.

## IGNORING

Some students respond best to being ignored when they are being inappropriate. The class can be encouraged to assist with this intervention by being awarded bonus points or small treats for ignoring inappropriate behavior. Be quick to give the student plenty of attention when his or her behavior becomes appropriate.

This intervention is not the best one for students who are extremely physically aggressive.

## OVERPRACTICE

For students who deface property, throw food, urinate on the floor and walls, or knock furniture over, overpractice will often get their attention. Basically all this involves is having the students clean up the mess they made and then do more cleaning to practice the new skill. A student who throws food in the lunchroom can be expected to mop the whole cafeteria floor and wipe off all cafeteria tables. While the student is doing this, he or she should receive little or no attention. The adult who is monitoring the student should refrain from scolding, nagging, or chatting. This is not a social time. When the student is finished, praise for a job well done is appropriate.

## INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS

This intervention requires careful planning and is used only after other classroom procedures have failed. Individual contracts outline in specific, observable terms the inappropriate behaviors the student exhibits, and the expected, desired behaviors, punishments, and rewards. A form should be filled out with this information, and all parties involved should sign it.

The sample on page 99 has worked extremely well for many students over the years.

*Note:* Do not use exclusion from school without the parent's knowledge or if the student really would rather be at home.

For younger students, a puzzle that illustrates a desired item is a good motivator. The contract can include a larger reward at a defined end point. The student can earn parts of the puzzle until the total goal is reached.

## HIERARCHY OF PUNISHMENTS

1. Verbal warning.
2. Mark on the chalkboard.
3. Three marks equal a "0" on the point sheet.
4. Cool-off. The student will sit in a chair or carrel removed from the activity area of the room. Points are earned here. Bonus points can be earned for going without being told to avoid a problem. Time in cool-off is short.
5. In-class suspension. The student will sit in a chair or carrel as far away from other activities as possible. No points are earned here—Work can be done if the student is calm enough. Time in this area is longer.
6. Time-out. The student will sit in a chair or carrel outside the classroom if possible. No points are earned here. No classwork is done here. Time in this area is variable. Students do not return to the class until they do whatever time they were told to do in in-class suspension first.
7. Exclusion from school by being sent home or by serving some kind of in-school suspension program if it is available.

## HIERARCHY OF REWARDS

1. Verbal praise.
2. Points on the point sheet.
3. Edible rewards.
4. Tangible rewards that are not edible.
5. Certificates.
6. Bonus points.
7. Classroom store.
8. "Student of the Week" award.
9. Recognition in class or schoolwide for some achievement.
10. Special activity period.
11. Permission to visit other classes or staff members.
12. Permission to run errands for the teacher.
13. Assignment as classroom helper.
14. Assignment as office helper.

## SAMPLE CONTRACT

### 1. *Problem Behaviors*

Refuses to do work.

Leaves room without permission.

Screams and curses at classmates and teachers.

Urinates on walls and the floor in the time-out area.

### 2. *Desired Behavior*

a. Complete one half of the math assignment before getting breakfast. Complete math before going to PE. Complete at least one other morning assignment before getting lunch.

b. Ask permission before leaving the room. Stay in the room and discuss the problem with the teacher or sit quietly.

c. Talk appropriately to the teacher and classmates.

d. Complete time-out in an appropriate manner.

### 3. *Punishments*

a. No food or PE until above-stated assignments are completed.

b. Time-out and a loss of one special activity period each time the student leaves the room without permission.

c. In-class suspension for talking inappropriately to teachers and peers (5 minutes for each inappropriate comment).

d. The student will wash the entire time-out area each time he urinates in it. All walls and the floor will be scrubbed.

e. Exclusion from school for the remainder of the day if the student refuses to follow this contract.

### 4. *Rewards*

a. Eat breakfast and lunch on time with the rest of the class.

b. Go to PE on time with the rest of the class.

c. Visit another staff member of the student's choice to show that staff member the completed work and receive a small, edible reward.

d. Join classmates in special activity periods.

e. Earn a weekly cooking activity.

f. Avoid in-class suspension and time-out.

g. Remain in school.

h. Receive a special edible reward at the end of each day that the student talks appropriately to teachers and peers.

### 5. *Signatures*

Student _____

Teacher _____

Any Other Staff Member(s) Involved _____

## BLANK CONTRACT

***1. Problem Behaviors***

***2. Desired Behavior***

***3. Punishments***

***4. Rewards***

***5. Signatures***

Student _____

Teacher _____

Any Other Staff Member(s) Involved _____

APPENDIX J

# Quick-Reference Checklists for Intervention Strategies

## PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE PERSONALITY

### Distinguishing Behaviors

_____ Habitually slow to start or stop an activity on time.

_____ Often "forgets" to follow directions, but rarely forgets favored activities.

_____ Encouragement in the form of reminding the student of pending punishments as well as rewards produces even slower performance and less compliance.

_____ Does little that is really "bad" but manages to alienate his or her peers.

_____ Drops things, loses things, looks for things, suddenly needs to use the restroom or get a drink just as the class gets settled and ready to listen.

### Interventions

_____ Don't nag and remind.

_____ Ignore as much inappropriate behavior as possible.

_____ If the student can read, supply him or her with a list of rules, rewards, and consequences in writing. Use picture symbols if the student cannot read. Tape it to the student's desk or bulletin board space.

_____ Failure to comply within a predetermined time will equal a punishment. Compliance will equal a reward.

_____ Give instructions one time. Be specific.

_____ Without nagging or discussing it further, follow through on the consequences.

_____ When the student wants to discuss how he or she forgot or couldn't really help it, respond that you are aware of how people sometimes make mistakes, but that the consequences are the same. Be matter of fact.

_____ Don't show anger.

_____ Don't accept excuses.

## ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

### Distinguishing Behaviors

_____ Is fidgety.

_____ Is off task often.

_____ Interrupts own train of thought with off-the-topic comments.

_____ Starts but rarely finishes things.

_____ Is always busy but never gets anywhere with it.

_____ Gets loud and overstimulated easily.

_____ Sometimes escalates to physical aggression.

_____ Talks out; is talkative.

_____ Is unorganized.

_____ Wanders.

_____ Is easily confused by too many directions at once.

_____ Is distractible.

### Interventions

_____ Divide assignments into two parts whenever possible. Reward the student for each half completed.

_____ Provide the student with self-structuring activities.

_____ Have an "office" area for this student to use during independent work times. This area is not to be used as a punishment. It is a special area with few visual distractions meant to help the student stay focused.

_____ Put clothespins on a line. The student moves the clothespins each time an assignment is completed. A new assignment is not to be started until the first is finished.

_____ Send the student on errands as a reward for completion of work. This student needs to move occasionally.

_____ Praise for what is done works better than reminders to finish. Say, "I see that you have already completed five items! This is great! I can't wait to see the next five! Please raise your hand when you finish them so I can come to see what you have done."

_____ Watch the student's schedule for too much activity or too much time with nothing to do.

_____ Raise your own hand to remind a student who is interrupting to raise his or her hand and wait to be called on. Don't talk to the student until his or her hand is raised.

_____ Refuse to talk to the student unless he or she is in the assigned area. Turn your back if the student walks up to you. Say, "I only talk to people who are in their seats." When the student sits, turn around and walk toward him or her.

## CONDUCT DISORDER

### Distinguishing Behaviors

_____ Has little respect for authority.

_____ Uses profanity profusely.

_____ Often talks about fighting.

_____ Is quick to anger.

_____ Often misunderstands others' intentions.

_____ Active play often becomes overstimulating, resulting in fighting.

_____ Is impulsive.

_____ Is explosive.

_____ Has low tolerance for frustration.

_____ Throws items.

_____ Spits, kicks, hits, bites, urinates on people or school items.

_____ Vandalizes.

_____ Is sensitive to issues of fairness only if related to his or her own consequences.

_____ May leave assigned area without permission (i.e., run away).

### Interventions

_____ Actively enforce the rule that people are not for hurting.

_____ Send a clear message that physical assaults will not be tolerated.

_____ Take extra care to be *consistent* with the student.

_____ Structure academic assignments for maximum opportunities for success.

_____ Carefully monitor peer interactions.

_____ Send the student on an errand (even if it is only to deliver a message to the office that says, "Just take this and say Thanks.") to get him or her out of a potentially overwhelming situation before things get out of hand.

_____ Tell the student how much you appreciate his or her self-control even in the midst of a problem. It may seem silly to compliment a student who has thrown every book in his or her desk across the room for not attempting to hurt anyone. However, students with conduct disorders do not trust adults. They often feel that the teacher is only there to punish. Constant reminders of appropriate decision making, even in the midst of a problem, help them feel more trusting of the teacher, and they also help them get in touch with their own ability to handle themselves appropriately.

_____ Give the student extra bonus points or an edible reward for going to the cool-off area on his or her own to avoid a problem.

_____ Reward the student specifically for handling problems in the classroom without running away.

_____ Whenever possible, ignore comments made to discount compliments made about the student's appropriate behavior.

_____ Don't overreact to profanity and disrespectful comments. Spending 5 minutes in the cool-off area for each curse word is sufficient.

## DEPRESSION/SUICIDAL TENDENCIES

### Distinguishing Behaviors

_____ May be withdrawn.

_____ May be aggressive.

_____ May be whiney and clinging.

_____ May daydream excessively.

_____ May give up without trying.

_____ May seem lethargic.

_____ May seem tense.

_____ May cry easily.

_____ May express exaggerated fears.

### Interventions

_____ Structure academic assignments for success.

_____ Encourage participation with rewards.

_____ Be matter of fact when reassuring the student about a fear. Take the fear seriously, but don't take too much time with unnecessary explanations.

_____ Show the student real evidence of past successes.

_____ Help the student focus on decisions and actions that require immediate attention.

_____ Talk with the student about the importance of remembering that mistakes are a valuable part of learning. One little mistake can easily become an insurmountable obstacle without occasional reality input from others.

_____ Ask the student to listen to another, less capable student read. Give this student little jobs to reinforce positive feelings about himself or herself.

_____ Take any threats of suicide seriously. Get assistance from the school social worker, psychologist, or guidance counselor. Notify parents.

_____ Do not let a student who has threatened suicide leave the room unescorted.

_____ Watch for any sudden mood changes. Even a change for the better could signal a problem if the change is unexplainable or sudden.

## PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS

### Distinguishing Behaviors

_____ Evidence of hallucinations.

_____ Repetitive speech patterns.

_____ Repetitive behaviors that appear meaningless.

_____ Refusal to talk for extended periods of time.

_____ Periods when the student appears not to be able to hear.

_____ Reports from the student of people or creatures that do not exist for others, but do have some kind of control over this student.

_____ Extreme mood swings.

### Interventions

_____ Be consistent. This student needs predictable behavior from the teacher to help counteract the chaos in his or her own head.

_____ Keep schedules as stable as possible.

_____ Give the student plenty of warning and explanation if changes must be made.

_____ Always talk to the student as if he or she can understand. The student's behavior may not be a good indicator of when or how much he or she understands.

_____ Punishments and rewards are appropriate.

_____ Punishments should be handled as calmly as possible.

_____ Reward as often as possible.

_____ Do not send the student on errands unless he or she is familiar with the school and is stable.

_____ Keep in close contact with the parents. These students with psychotic disorders are often being seen by psychiatrists and are often on medication of some kind. Find out what medication the student is on. If the student shows signs of side effects or his or her behavior changes drastically, contact the parents. Written permission to talk with the doctor is usually required.

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